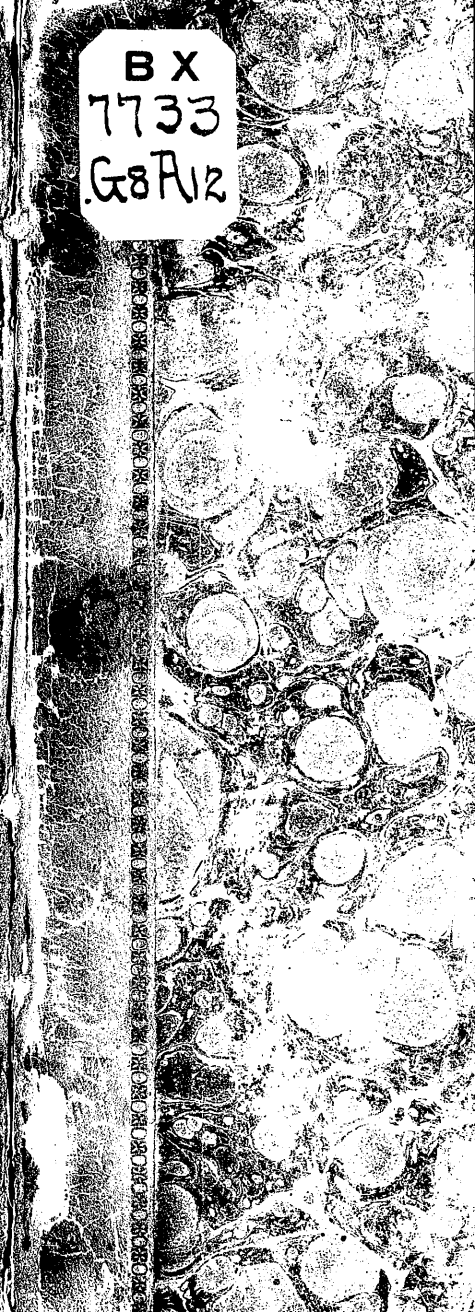
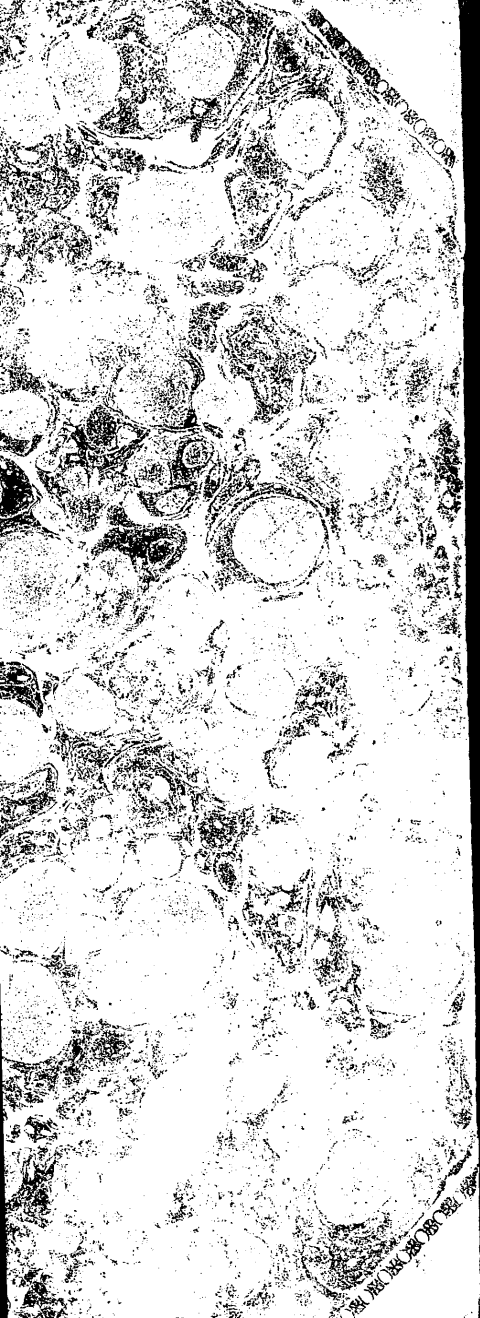


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from his special friend
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2

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

LETTERS AND OTHER PAPERS

OF

WILLIAM GROVER;

PRECEDED BY

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF HIS LIFE.

“Be not slothful, but followers of them who through
faith and patience inherit the promises.”—*Heb. vi. 11.*

SECOND EDITION.

London:

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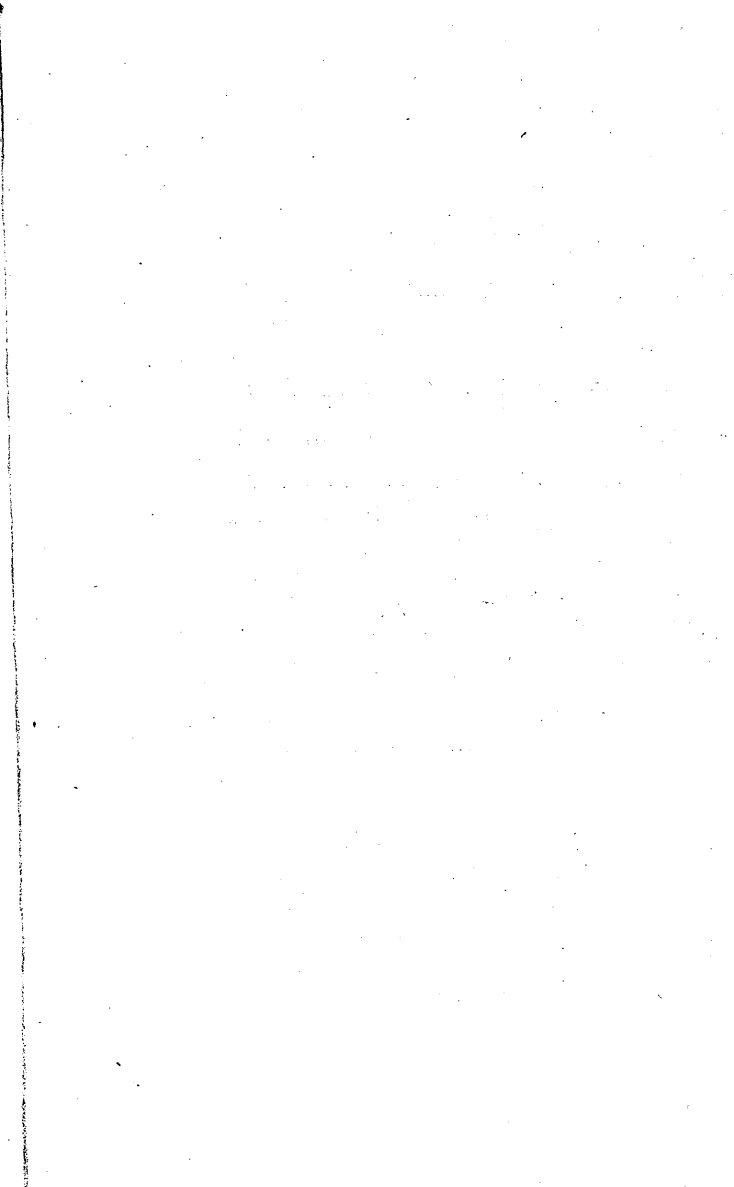
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Our late friend, WILLIAM GROVER, was so justly esteemed in our religious Society, that it has been thought the following Selection from his Letters and Papers would be acceptable to his friends. They may instructively revive the recollection of his Christian labours and example amongst us; and of his earnest solicitude for the preservation of his friends from all that is evil, and for their growth in true piety.

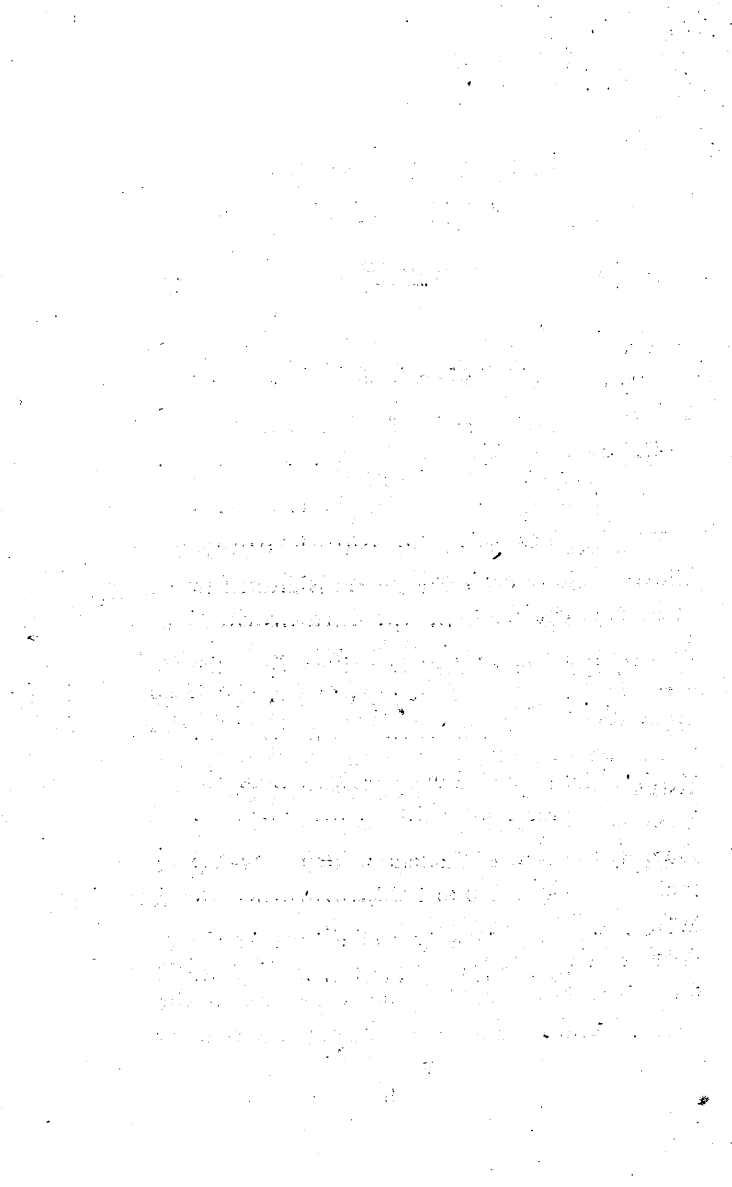
J. F.

Tottenham, 8th month, 1828.



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SELECTIONS, &c.

CHAP. I.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF WILLIAM GROVER.

WILLIAM GROVER, the son of William and Elizabeth Grover, was born at Brighthelmstone in Sussex, the 15th of the 11th month, 1752. Very few particulars are known of his early life. After leaving school, he was placed as an apprentice with Edmund Rack, a Friend, who was a retail country shopkeeper, at Bardfield in Essex. Soon after the expiration of the term, he engaged himself as an assistant to Samuel Day, who was also a member of our religious society, and in a similar business, and who lived at Stansted Mount-Fitchet, in the same county. After serving him with diligence and integrity for several years, he became a partner in the concern, and resided there during the remain-

der of his life. He inherited some patrimonial property, his father having died when he was young; but, at the same time, he found it necessary to pursue his engagements in business, and was esteemed an upright tradesman, of kind and respectful manners; one who was careful, in all things, to act as becomes a member of our religious society. He continued in trade until within a few years of his decease; and though diligent in attending to these, the necessary cares of life, he was not engrossed with them: possessing a well-regulated and pious mind, he may be said to have pursued the concerns of time with eternity steadily in view.

In the year 1786, he married Isabel Weatherald, of Wensleydale, in the north-western parts of Yorkshire, who has survived him; and in their union, for nearly forty years, which was a source of mutual comfort and happiness, he proved himself a truly-affectionate husband; uniformly evincing, under every circumstance, the greatest tenderness and sympathy.

The subject of this memoir, was one who, from early life, was of a thoughtful turn of mind, and showed a strong attachment to the principles and testimonies of Friends. As he advanced in years, he submitted to the humbling, refining operations of divine grace; and,

through continued watchfulness and obedience to the pointings of duty, he attained to that experience and stability in the truth, of which his conduct and religious usefulness afterwards gave abundant proof. A description of some parts of his religious character, is appropriately given in the following extracts, from a memorial concerning him, issued by the Friends of Thaxted monthly meeting, of which he was a member.

“It is not our intention to extol the character of the deceased, as a man, estimable as he was, in the various relations of life; but to exhibit his Christian virtues, and ascribe, as he did, all excellency to the power of divine grace, mercifully granted to mankind, for their salvation, through the mediation of the blessed Redeemer, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The rectitude of his conduct, in the discharge of his moral and religious duties, his humility, meekness, and dedication to the cause of truth, were all fruits of faith in the means thus graciously afforded.

“He was very exemplary in the fulfilment of his duty to his Maker, by a constant attendance of religious meetings, when of ability; in which his solid deportment indicated great reverence of spirit, and fervency of desire to gain access

to the Fountain of all Good ; and, on these occasions, we believe that his mind was often enriched with the incomes of divine love and peace. .

“ He was a great lover of retirement and meditation. The frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures was also a source of instruction and comfort to him; and this practice he was often tenderly engaged to recommend to others, as one of the means by which they might be strengthened and encouraged to advance in the Christian path.

“ The views he took of himself were humble, whilst his estimate of the true Christian character was a highly exalted one. Hence arose great vigilance and circumspection, that no part of his demeanour should dishonour the cause he so greatly valued and loved. This care was manifested in all his conduct; and evidently so, in transacting the affairs of the church, in which his judgment was clear, and his language persuasive; tending much to encourage friends in the support of the discipline, in the executive part of which he very rarely excused himself from service; having a great care for the prosperity of truth, and that his fellow-professors might be faithful in our testimonies, and consistent in all their conduct, endeavouring to

keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

“Perhaps few have been so much favoured with the prevalence of love: it seemed to be the constant clothing of his mind, and was evinced towards all classes of society. The youth, especially, were the objects of his tender solicitude; for whose early attention to the reproofs of instruction, and for their growth and establishment in the Truth, he felt an unremitting concern.”

His important services in our yearly meeting, and his communications to his friends, will be long remembered. He often spoke of the comfort which he derived from reflecting on the goodness, and mercy, and loving-kindness of our Heavenly Father; inviting others, and particularly his younger friends, to seek to live under the influence of his love. His remarks were clear, comprehensive, and concise; and the precious influence which they produced, was often, in a remarkable degree, to be felt, after the conclusion of them.

He was a willing labourer in the church of Christ—an elder worthy of double honour; doing what his hands found to do with a cheerful heart, as one serving a good and gracious Master, and thus forcibly recommending the

principles he professed. Highly valuing the care which our Christian discipline provides, and manifesting a deep concern for its being rightly and impartially exercised, he at the same time discovered much caution and tenderness in cases of delinquency, cherishing feelings of love and compassion, when judging of the errors and weaknesses of others. He was very anxious that all the meetings, established for transacting the affairs of our society, should be held under the influence of Christian love, and in the fear of the Lord; being convinced that, were this the case, they would often be times of solid instruction.

Whilst he was a firm believer in the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit, he was diffident in speaking of his own experience; and though well persuaded that our religious principles lead to great spirituality, he was very cautious of judging others, or deciding for them. His desire was, that all might be drawn in love to seek after the guidance of that wisdom which cometh from above, and to see the beauty and excellency of the truth as it is in Jesus. Believing, as he did, that our predecessors had been called to uphold a pure and perfect standard of Christian doctrine, he was deeply solicitous that this might in no way be lowered by Friends of the present day; and

that they as individuals, and the Society as a body, might endeavour so to act, as to bring others to see and to acknowledge the consistency of our profession with the gospel dispensation.

His general appearance was meek and grave, exhibiting a bright example of a religious character; an habitual gratitude, and filial fear of God, marking his life and demeanour. He behaved with great kindness and courtesy to all; at the same time maintaining the dignity of a disciple of Christ, so that his deportment commanded esteem and deference.

Our dear and honoured friend was particularly pleased with the society of young persons; and to many of this class he was endeared by the sweetness and affability of his manners, conversing with them in a way which secured their confidence and esteem. He felt tender solicitude for them, in thinking of the temptations to which they were peculiarly exposed; and whether any hints which he offered to these, were designed to encourage them to persevere in the right way of the Lord, or to check the early appearance of a departure from Christian simplicity, they were expressed with so much love, that they found a ready entrance into the heart. Highly valuing the approved writings of our Society, he often recommended

them to the attention of those in early life. He promoted also their perusal of works of literature and useful information; but saw a danger in the young and inexperienced entering much into the religious opinions of others. Yet he was far from being illiberal in his views, often gratefully acknowledging his belief, that sects and distinctions are lost in the divine sight.

William Grover appeared to think unkindly of no one; but, when obliged to censure the conduct of any, he did it with great feeling and compassion. At the same time, there was a quick perception of what was wrong, and it was not allowed to pass unreprieved. He had a strong objection to hearing the absent slightly spoken of, or their faults made the topic of conversation. On these occasions he would observe silence, or remind the company to be careful in their remarks on others, lest they should unguardedly injure the character of their friends; being himself careful not to make comparisons. He was of a cheerful, contented disposition, and considered it right to derive pleasure and gratification from temporal things, as blessings from the hand of an Almighty Benefactor; provided they were kept in subordination to the great purpose of life, and not suffered to engross too much of the time and affections. He met the vicissitudes of life with calmness,

and was careful not to suffer cross occurrences to discompose his mind, or to draw him into the use of impatient expressions.

The remembrance of his absent friends was frequent and lively; and he evinced a warm affection for those whom he had loved and esteemed in his youth. He seldom forgot the afflicted, whether rich or poor. To those of the latter class he was kind and considerate, relieving their wants, often visiting them in their dwellings, when he would enter into conversation in a way adapted to them, and peculiar to himself; and frequently, in the retired circle of his own family, would speak of and commiserate the condition of those who had received fewer blessings than himself, or who had had a greater portion of affliction or suffering.

He was a man of great punctuality and order in the daily transactions of life, seldom deferring until the morrow the work of the day; steady and diligent in what he undertook, and a good economist of time. Few were aware of the extent of his usefulness in cases of a private nature, among his neighbours. To these he was free of access on all occasions; and much of his time was employed in their service. Possessing an intelligent mind and a clear judgment, he was often consulted; and his assistance was fre-

quently solicited to settle little differences. He entered into such cases with great deliberation: his decisions were not hastily formed, and they were mostly well received.

When the Auxiliary Bible Society was formed in that part of the county of Essex in which he resided, he readily united in the support of it, and took an active part in investigating the want of the Scriptures among his poorer neighbours. He was a diligent member of the committee until the time of his illness, and felt a lively interest in the circulation of the Scriptures, both at home and abroad. At the same time, he was anxious that the concerns of this society might be conducted under the influence of those feelings, and in that temper of mind, to which the Sacred Writings bear testimony; and, whilst believing, as he did, in the divine authority of Holy Scripture, he was very desirous that these records should be properly designated, and that men should not confound the possession and distribution of the Bible, and the mere knowledge of its contents, with the partaking of those living waters which flow immediately from Christ, the fountain of life—of that bread which cometh down from heaven, and which, when received with a lively, operative faith, enables us to work out the salvation of the soul with fear and trembling.

His friends had ample evidence of his being a firm believer in the essential doctrines of the Gospel. In a memorandum left behind him, he says: "I believe it is consistent with the genuine principles of Friends, that all the communications of the mercy, love, power, and goodness of God to his creature man, are in, by, and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and no otherwise, and in this belief I am thankful to live and unite."

In a letter, written in the eleventh month, 1823, after alluding, in terms of strong disapprobation, to the views of one whose sentiments were decidedly contrary to those of our society, "on a point of such supreme importance as the divine nature of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," he proceeds: "Can I close this subject better, than with the following quotation from a recently-published pamphlet, in which the writer, when speaking of Christ, says: 'What encouragement and comfort is there in the contemplation of his character and offices, both as prophetically indicated, and evangelically displayed, from the first and most obscure, to the last and most comprehensive and expressive: *viz.* The Bruiser of the Serpent's head; Immanuel, God with us; the Lord our righteousness; the Child born; the Son given, upon whose shoulders the government of his

people is for ever to be; whose name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace; the root and the offspring of David; the bright and morning Star; the Son of Man; the Son and Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world; who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood*.”

William Grover possessed a sound constitution, and enjoyed remarkably good health, until within a few months of his death. On the 16th of 5th month, 1825, he left home early in the morning, to attend the Yearly Meeting, from which he had been very seldom absent for nearly forty years. He arrived in London in time for the first sitting of the meeting of ministers and elders, and acted as an assistant to the clerk; an office which he had for some time acceptably filled, and which he resigned at the close of that sitting. With his accustomed alacrity and interest in the concerns of the society, he entered, throughout the day, into the proceedings of the meeting. Towards the evening he felt unwell, and, in the course of the night was so alarmingly ill, that his wife was sent for early the following morning. His disorder was a very

* “A comprehensive View of the Nature of Faith,”
page 46.

painful one; and, for several days, his life was considered to be in great danger. His medical attendants attributed his restoration to health, so far as it took place, to the serenity and humble resignation with which he bore his sufferings, as much as to the means which were employed.

The following memorandum, written in London, on the occasion of this illness, was found among his papers.

“This has been a remarkable visitation, such an one as I never knew; except that of the small-pox, more than forty years ago, may be at all compared with it. I might be said to be attacked very unexpectedly, and in a lonely condition; but help and comfort, as to outward accommodation, sprang up remarkably; and I think it might be said, that every requisite was supplied. As to the most important part, it seemed to have a great effect in breaking the mind off from this world, and exciting earnest desires for a preparation and fitness to enter into rest and peace everlasting.

“One feature was very striking: the kind, affectionate interest of Friends, respecting me and my case, was indeed beyond what it would seem proper to record. But, at the same time, perhaps at scarce any period have I so feelingly and clearly seen my own unworthiness and in-

significance, or so feelingly prized a state of littleness and humble reduction; so that, like a little babe, I might be permitted, in simplicity and perfect innocence, to draw nourishment in quietness from the breast of ever-enduring and inexhaustible consolation."

In a letter to two of his intimate friends, he remarks:

"I am desirous (I hope with a degree of humble gratitude) of informing you, that, within three or four days, considerable improvement in my health has taken place; and, whilst I am so abundantly sensible, from recent past experience, of the uncertainty of the things of time, yet I wish duly to appreciate this favour, permitted to a poor traveller through the chequered vale of time."

Towards the end of the sixth month, he so far recovered, as to be able to return home, on which occasion he made the following memorandum.

1825.—7 mo. 13. "Being permitted, on the 30th ult. in company with my dear wife, cousin Elizabeth Glaisyer, and John Hooper, to reach home in safety, I am aware it is my duty, not only as a child, to crave divine consolation, but also to watch the openings and presentations of duty which may be vouchsafed, however small; so that the talent entrusted may not be buried

under the feelings of feebleness, or any thing else."

In two letters to his friends, not long afterwards, he thus alludes to his illness :

1825.—8 *mo.* 7. " We can see but little before us ; and what a favour it is, when circumstances arise, to be enabled to meet them with prudence and peaceful resignation. This illness may be said to be a proof that we are not our own keepers, but poor, dependent creatures. Oh ! that we may have light in our dwelling and on our path ; and, through boundless mercy, peace within our borders."

8 *mo.* 26. " Respecting resignation, how just are thy remarks, that our wishes as well as our works should at all times harmonize with the divine will : indeed, our study should be, to be circumscribed thereby ; but this is no light matter, but a high and most precious attainment. Do not thy remarks, however, beg two most interesting questions ; namely, ' the day's work accomplished, and the expected consequent reward ? ' also, ' the time arrived for dissolving every tender, earthly tie ? ' With awfulness and reverence these may be left in the holy, dispensing hand of Him who doeth all things well ; whilst we, in grateful, humble, sensibility of the value of the present precious blessings, manifest our due estimation of them, by

neglecting no proper means to secure their continuance in due and filial submission, all the while, to his infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy."

As the health of William Grover improved a little after his return home, his friends cherished the pleasing hope that his valuable life would be lengthened, and that they should be permitted longer to partake of the instruction to be derived from his bright example and Christian counsel. But He who ordereth all in perfect wisdom, and who will graciously supply the spiritual need of those who look in faith unto Him, saw meet to terminate the trials of this his faithful servant, and to admit him, as there is every reason to believe, to the participation of that peace and joy which are reserved for the righteous in the life which is to come.

"The expressions of a religious nature, that our late dear friend uttered towards the close of life, were not numerous; but they all partook of that humble, yet confiding and peaceful character, that distinguished him when in health, and bespoke a mind looking towards heaven, of which, he said, he had 'had a pleasant view, particularly of late;' and that he was 'favoured to feel very little condemnation.' At different times he thus expressed himself: 'The prevailing desire of my mind has been, for

many years, that I might close in peace. I have have had many blessings, many temptations, and many trials, in my time; but have been mercifully helped through them.' At one time, evidently under great tenderness of spirit, he observed, 'The shadow of divine mercy is very broad;' and at another, when conversing about his illness, he said, 'It is a source of great consolation to know, that He who formed us is near.'

"In the afternoon of the day preceding his decease, he expressed himself to the following effect: 'There is nothing so precious, whether in youth or in age, sickness or health, as a sense of the divine presence and love. I have had great cause thankfully to believe, that the protecting arm of kind Providence has been with me all my life long, from my youth up; and, after a pause, added, 'It is my greatest desire that my sun, which now seems nearly set, may go down in brightness, without a cloud; relying only upon the goodness of the Almighty, who can change a life of suffering for one of comfort and endless happiness—who can make a death-bed as a bed of roses. Yea, I bless thy holy name, thy presence and love can make a death-bed as a bed of roses.' Afterwards he said, in nearly these words: 'My life seems fast closing, and my afflictions nearly at an end. I

have been greatly afflicted, [alluding probably to his illness,] but doubt not that it has been in unspeakable, unerring wisdom, that I have been thrown, again and again, into the furnace; which is, no doubt, designed for my further refinement. Oh! may all the purposes of the Almighty be fulfilled. Oh! what a precious state is that, where nothing is wanted but the celestial gate to be opened. All praise I ascribe unto the Lord's holy name *.' ”

He was enabled to bear, with great patience and Christian fortitude, the extreme sufferings which he endured within a short time of his death; but, for a few hours before the close, he was mercifully relieved from all pain, and his end was remarkably peaceful. He died the 11th of the 10th month, 1825, in the seventy-third year of his age.

* See the Memorial of Thaxted Monthly Meeting.

CHAP. II.

MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

1783.—4 *mo.* 27. How different a character is he who is fond of procrastinating and delaying, from him, who, with a wise regard to the uncertainty of to-morrow, nobly improves each opportunity whilst he has it.

10 *mo.* 15. From disobedience and difficulty, surely I am a dwarf, by not coming rightly forward to the duty of the day. How main a thing, through all, is an attention to the conclusion. Do not some of us labour and toil ourselves, to do *that* from fear, which those who are in the life of goodness do from love?

1784.—10 *mo.* 13. Oh that none in ease and plenty may contribute, improperly, to make it difficult for those in less favoured circumstances to think of the Author of their being with gratitude and love.

1790.—5 *mo.* 11. "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light." It appears a precious thing rightly to believe in the light, and to follow it;

treading in the just man's path, which is said to be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." It is probable that many under our name do not believe in this light, nor expect, through faithfulness to its discoveries, to be led on further and further to the knowledge of the will of God, and to an establishment in his peaceable kingdom, even whilst in this life: not being like minded with a remnant who believe that his kingdom *is* come; and who desire, according to ability, to be pressing into it, that they may be faithful subjects of it, and that the government may be on the shoulders of Him whom they desire to serve.

8 *mo.* 17. It is a fine thing to be preserved from every snare. I believe we may be so engaged in things which bear the appearance of being lawful, and even necessary and incumbent, as to be disqualified from possessing that tender, childlike, attentive state of mind, which appears so necessary to our growth in a divine life, and to a true filial obedience, in all things, to the will of our Heavenly Father.

1792.—4 *mo.* 12. Oh! for a sincere love and attachment to that pure and undefiled religion, which stands in a filial devotedness of heart to do the Lord's will, and in a reverent, holy travail of soul, to be made truly acquainted with

what his will is; that so we may not be deceived, under an apprehension that we are fulfilling the divine will, when we are rather frustrating it by doing our own. This, I believe, may be the case, even in things which may have a good-like appearance.

1799.—6 *mo.* 13. I believe it is good for young men to make a point of devoting a small portion, at least, of every day, to read a little in the Bible, and endeavour after a little calm and quiet in their minds. Something may be presented to their minds in these short seasons of inward calm, which may a little nourish and cherish the divine life in the soul, and make room for the love of God to prevail a little; and so, as this love is cherished and found to grow, the love of the world, and earnest desire after it, will lessen, and the soul be prepared to take its chief delight in something spiritual and heavenly.

6 *mo.* 22. I feel low, under a sense of my want of the necessary qualification for active service in the church. Oh! that there may be more of a waiting for the putting forth; and a deeper and more frequently-renewed travail after dwelling in the pure life of religion, and after inward communion with the Lord;—to know his will, and receive ability, in the

abasement and abnegation of self, to do it to his glory, and my own soul's true peace.

1801.—9 mo. 14. Oh! that we may be made what the Lord would have us to be; that is, in harmony with his work in the earth; standing faithful, according to the present day's administration and service, as many of our worthy predecessors stood faithful in their day and time. The great thing is, *to be found in our lot*, let the state of Truth's cause be whatsoever it may in the world.

I think I see a great danger in Friends getting into easy circumstances: it renders them not so strong, and able to endure hardness as good soldiers. I believe *all we have* must be at the divine disposal, and so felt by us, before we can be fully qualified to endure all things that may be required of a disciple of Christ, in filling up his lot in the militant church.

1810.—8 mo 8. I find great proneness in the mind to be, every now and then, laying hold of something wherein to expect a sort of permanency of satisfaction, if not of delight; but I doubt my capacity to do this, and yet retain a due readiness sincerely to say, "Thy will be done," should these things be called for. When we use the words, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," surely we mean to be sincere; but what submission and devotion of heart and

will does this imply: no obstruction or resistance to the divine will "as in heaven."

11 *mo.* 8. I believe we came into this world for the great and momentous purpose of being eternally happy. Even the present life, which is a mixed and a probationary state, is replete with numberless blessings, and precious enjoyments, along with the attendant trials. And our duty and highest interest is, so to encounter the trials incident to this present existence, and so to participate of the comforts and mercies afforded, as that our minds may be capable to bless the Lord for his goodness, in giving us a being, and preserving us; and to meet the end with resignation and peace.

11 *mo.* 10. The true dignity of man—of a Christian—consists in endeavouring to fill up his duty, in the station which he is permitted to fill in this world. There are few, if any situations, in which a man who is upright may not shine. There is lustre in integrity; and the peace which Christ gives to his humble, dependent children, can reach the humble cottager, as well as the inhabitant of the mansion. Many, by having their eye out after things not within their reach, nor within their sphere, neglect or overlook surrounding and intended blessings; and so are not thankful, as they might be. Thankfulness for mercies received is a very

precious feeling, and gives a sweet relish to what we enjoy. Let us, therefore, in the first place, be sensible, and feel what we are, and diligently occupy and improve our talents and gifts, in the fear of the Lord; and desire, above all things, to be kept within the reach of his blessing; so shall the increase, if permitted, be enjoyed without violating the peace of our minds.

1811.—4 *mo.* 28. A precious sentiment it is, “that the spirit of benevolence, if cherished and encouraged, sends forth fresh shoots.” The soul is enriched by an increase of benevolence, although the means of gratifying or exercising it, to an extent adequate to our feelings, may not be within our power.

1812.—1 *mo.* 25. It is a precious thing to have a belief and feeling produced in our minds, that we are under the divine gracious care and protection. Perhaps I have not sustained more loss, or religious disadvantage, any way, than I have for want of more diligently minding the *very* gentle intimations or calls to inward stillness. A feeling of a connexion with the Fountain of Good is, above all things, to be prized; and this feeling is utterly out of our control or command, and consequently to be accepted with reverence and cheerfulness, whenever vouchsafed. We cannot prize it too much: it

is a treasure in prosperity: it is a treasure in adversity: it will be emphatically a treasure, when the awful moments arrive for us to bid an eternal farewell to the things of time and sense.

8 *mo.* 22.—We are, indeed, fearfully and wonderfully made. From the nature of our present condition, we see things very differently at different times; perhaps, in part, occasioned by our attempting to see and judge when we are not in a situation for it.

10 *mo.* 24 Having now, except about three weeks, completed my sixtieth year, I may say, that in turning over some of the leaves of my past life, I may record occasions of reverent and humble thankfulness, for having been permitted to escape with as little of wounds and bruises as I have; and for the extension of divine goodness and mercy towards me, many ways. And I think my religious experience, if I may call any thing which I have known by that name, has been much found in the path of faith, rather than of sight. Just enough vouchsafed to preserve me a believer in the path, and in the power which sustains in it. Perhaps this has been the manner in which I have been led along, because it was best for me, as most calculated to keep me humble; often having nothing good, nor knowing how to come at any good; but

at times sweetly refreshed with calmness and serenity, rather than with the spirit of warm devotion, or any thing like ecstasy or rapture.

1813.—1 *mo.* 22. The great thing appears to be, to have the right hunger and thirst after righteousness excited and preserved, or maintained, in the mind; then things which are of an earthly, transitory, or unsatisfying nature, will be *trials*, as they prevent a participation of the blessed fruits of this righteousness. Many are resting in these outward enjoyments, as if they were the *end* of our being; but the true Christian, the true believer, is permitted to enjoy abundance of blessings; without resting in them, and so has the comfort of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

1814.—3 *mo.* 24. To write of the immediate and particular influences of the Spirit of Truth upon the mind, in the way we understand and believe that subject, is a very delicate business, especially when an application is made to particular and striking instances; because it may often happen that there is really not a capacity in the persons addressed, to receive what is advanced. Whether the doctrine of clear, immediate revelation, in the present day, be truth and reality, as we most surely believe, or not, it must be granted to be possible that it may be so; that is, that it may be truth.

4 *mo.* 1 How many ways to involve the mind in a continual something that seems plausible; and so not keep it just in readiness to hear the call, to hearken to the voice, or yield to the gentle, inclining influence of divine love; an influence often so soft and silent, as to be very, very easily put by, quashed, lost, forgotten.

1815.—11 *mo.* 2. The occurrence of a great variety of things to engage the attention, on our own and other people's account, seems to fill up much of the time, which is passing over, *never to return*, that I have great occasion to be careful to give the preference to those things, if I can happily distinguish them, which are of the most importance; because the remaining sands in the glass are spending very fast, and, most probably, in a few years, at the longest, there will be none remaining. Whilst we are conflicting with the various infirmities of our nature, it is a precious thing, to those who are favoured, under all, and through all, to grow in religious experience; not casting away the shield, either in the day, or in the night season; but in humble trust and dependence on divine support, pressing forward, holding fast the profession of their faith; not easily blown about by floating opinions, but watching for the manifestations of that light, and of that calming influence which satisfies the soul, and gives ability

to rejoice, amidst the jeopardies of an earthly pilgrimage.

1817.—6 *mo.* When individuals, through disobedience or unfaithfulness, have been brought into grievous perplexity and embarrassment, it often happens, that, in condescending goodness towards his poor creatures, our Almighty Father does not will their continuance in this wilderness condition, but is graciously disposed to bring them out of it. But then, if we would come forth perfect, his own all-wise process must be submitted to with patience and resignation. Whatever the provings and the humiliation required, we may rest satisfied that they are necessary to effect the purpose intended; and if we are at length brought through, so as to stand in a state of acceptance before Him, and to partake of the peace which He gives, we shall not have to say, we have suffered more for the attainment of the prize, than it is found to be worth. Oh! the unspeakable value, to the exercised mind, of patience and resignation.

1818.—4 *mo.* 27. — conversing this morning on the politics of Europe, concluded with this beautiful sentiment: “that there is nothing substantial and satisfactory but the *Supreme Good*: in it, the deeper we go, and the more largely we drink, the better and happier we are;

whereas, in outward acquirements, if we could attain to the summit and perfection of them, the very possession and enjoyment palls."

9 *mo.* 6. Oh! the inestimable favour it is, to be true believers, and thereby to be made, from time to time, partakers of the [spiritual] bread which is broken, and the wine which is in mercy handed to sustain, to animate, to enliven the soul.

1819.—6 *mo.* 15. Oh! for some share of inheritance, or fellowship, with those whom the Lord delighteth to bless.

1821.—1 *mo.* 5. Many are the favours which the tried and exercised servants of the Lord have to commemorate, in the course of their devotion to his cause. May we all, in our various allotments, endeavour to be more and more preserved in a state of watchful dependence upon Him; that so, whether at home or abroad, our experience of his goodness, mercy, and truth, may be enlarged and confirmed, to our own consolation and support, and the consolation and encouragement of others.

5 *mo.* 20.—The Yearly Meeting was largely attended, and was a solid, instructive, and interesting season. As a religious society, we have much indeed to be thankful for; and I do hope there is much to be encouraged about, as to the state of things among us, although much to

lament. Perhaps few things more to be lamented, than that many of us are not enough convinced, that there is no advancing in true Christian experience, and inheriting the riches, and privileges, and consolations of the Gospel of Christ, without submitting to his yoke, and bearing his cross.

1822.—9 *mo.* 8. Reverently do I wish to acknowledge the belief, that there is that which can richly make amends for every privation, heal every breach, cause the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. But, oh! for an increase of capacity to look unto this, and to walk worthy of receiving such blessing.

1823.—2 *mo.* 23. It is a great privilege, in affliction, to be near tender, sympathizing friends; particularly, may I not say, at our time of life, when both bodily and mental energy may be considered on the decline. And oh! that, in all our trials, both inward and outward, the divine arm of everlasting loving-kindness and compassion may be underneath, to bear up and sustain, and afford us a safe landing at last, beyond the reach of all conflict and all fear.

7 *mo.* 21. We require some one to speak to freely, and also confidentially. And besides, how greatly is human comfort, at times increased, by a reciprocity of innocent commu-

nication. I believe it relieves the more weighty, and sometimes, over-anxious cogitations of the mind; and, by so relieving, contributes to our resuming them with more effect and advantage.

1824.—3 *mo.* 7. How much I desire that nothing, amidst all the ups and downs that occur, may be permitted to prevent us from seeking after the love and favour, the support and protection of our Heavenly Father. I think I scarcely ever found and felt it more needful for myself, than now of late time.

Give what Thou wilt, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee, rich, take what Thou wilt away.

1823.—10 *mo.* 12. How earnestly to be desired is a complete redemption from all selfishness: then would envy, pride, and wrath, no more torment the poor mind.

1824.—4 *mo.* May I, with reverence and humility, say, that I believe there is nothing to separate the redeemed soul from the spirit of the blessed Redeemer; and that, where He is, there will also his servants be. He that is in Christ is a new creature; and being, through redeeming love and mercy, brought into Him, and continuing in Him, who is the resurrection and the life, such shall never die, but remain in Him for ever and evermore.

8 *mo.* 1. It is a great comfort, when past seventy, to be pretty well; so as to enjoy the bounty of kind Providence, and endeavour to improve the further portion of time allotted; so that we may, through mercy, be ready for the final, awful change, when it comes.

12 *mo.* 8. How unspeakably worthy our love, our allegiance, our seeking after, and our more frequent communion, is the Spirit of Truth. How ought it to be [sought after] from day to day, and through the day, so as to raise and bear up our minds above the things of time, even whilst we are necessarily engaged in them; seeing they are all very uncertain, and we may be taken from them, or they from us, very unexpectedly. In such case, to have our minds previously well acquainted with divine love, and, as it were, enwrapped with it—what a treasure!

1825.—3 *mo.* What a fine thing it is to be preserved in the humility, simplicity, and stability which Truth gives to its sincere and devoted disciples. Oh! for a more general, deep acquaintance with the value of true quiet, where the thirst for change and novelty is not felt; but a sincere waiting and desire is known, after that which is not of man, nor of the strength and abilities of man, but of the Lord. Here, I believe, the creature will be kept low, diffident,

and fearful of itself; and more ready and desirous to be taught and instructed, than to fancy itself qualified to instruct others.

— The creation of the world and of man was, and is, a marvellous display of the divine glory; and the highest dignity and happiness of man, is to live in unison with this effect of the divine will and purpose, that we may not miss of intended good and enjoyment, which it seems are only to be this way come at. Our Heavenly Father wants nothing. He is perfect; his glory is perfect; and this or that act is only a display of such part of his glory, as his infinite wisdom thinks meet, and for the best, at any particular period, or on any particular occasion.

— The expression of beautiful sentiments, and the reading and approving of them, afford a delight to the mind; but do not always deepen us in religious sensibility, or increase our love for the simplicity of the Truth as it is in Jesus, or advance us in the consequent knowledge and experience of heavenly good. In contemplating this subject, I have remembered the import of a few expressions of an eminent minister: "We love the splendid, pleasant picture: but this is an easy purchase, in comparison of the deep-hid, inestimable pearl of substantial truth."

— This morning I have a somewhat lumi-

nous view of the nature and preciousness of gospel ministry, and other rightly-religious exercises. God is the inexhaustible fountain of all good: there is no goodness but what comes from Him; consequently, nothing for poor human nature to plume itself upon. This divine power goes forth in such manner, time, and degree, as is consistent with its own infinite wisdom and goodness; in displays of beneficence, mercy, and blessing to its creatures: sometimes in immediate communications of light, life, and divine virtue and sweetness to the souls of individuals, for their own advancement in the path of salvation; and sometimes in precious gifts of qualification, for the benefit of others, the edification of the church, and for other religious services.

— To have a mind preserved in such a state as to be susceptible of the impressions of heavenly good, I esteem of primary and vital importance. To those who desire to witness the fulness of gospel privilege and blessing, this is very essential; seeing that there are seasons in which such a sweetness and precious solemnity are to be witnessed, as is comparable, in degree, to heaven upon earth; as well as that it is our Christian duty to lead others, by our example and influence, to the same enjoyment.

— By how many and how various means

do we get broken down, and gradually prepared for our eternal separation from this frail and uncertain state of being; and how exceedingly is it to be desired that we may all so improve the time of health and bodily ability, as that, when sickness, pain, and affliction are measured out to us, we may be favoured with that sweetness and peace which bear up the mind above the waves, and enable us to say, the rod as well as the staff of the Lord's goodness, are our comfort and our rejoicing.

— Convince me, more and more, O Lord! I beseech thee, that thy time is the only time for true refreshment and comfort to the poor soul; and that every visitation of thy love and life is exceedingly precious, and not to be trifled with or passed by, as to a more convenient season of mine.

Grant, I pray thee, that the chief study of my life may be to be found in a state of readiness to receive, adopt, and yield to every of thy gracious offers of love and life; that so my poor soul may indeed have a share in the spiritual kingdom of Thee, the living and true God, even in this life; and so come increasingly to know that Thou art the only true riches, and that every thing else is fleeting and uncertain.

Remove, I pray thee, by the gentle showers of thy celestial rain, the hardness of my heart,

and make it very susceptible of the impressions of thy Holy Spirit; that I may be indeed thy servant, and that Thou mayst delight to bless me, and increase my knowledge and experience in thy precious truth, and in Thyself, the only and enduring treasure of the soul.

— Oh adorable Goodness, Wisdom, and Power! preserve me so, I pray Thee, that nothing may deprive me of the capacity to enjoy Thee, according to the manner and degree in which it may please Thee, in thy mercy, to make thyself known to thy poor, unworthy, but depending creature, in time and to all eternity.



CHAP. III.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS AND OTHER
PAPERS, RELATING TO THE CHARACTER
AND PRINCIPLES OF OUR RELIGIOUS
SOCIETY.

*Some Remarks on the religious Principles of the
People called Quakers, as to Wars and Fightings.*

It becomes those who profess faith towards God, and who, in obedience to what they believe to be their religious duty, differ in some things from other professors, to be willing, in meekness and fear, to render a reason for that difference. And as there may be many who have not been fully informed of the grounds on which the people called Quakers, ever since they were a people, have borne a testimony against Wars and Fightings, it may be acceptable to some serious inquirers, to know a little what those grounds are.

1st. They believe that the happiness of mankind, in an especial manner, depends upon their

living in the fear of God ; walking in obedience to the secret manifestations of Truth, through that divine principle of light and grace given to every man to profit with ; forsaking every thing which this divine principle manifests to be evil ; and following after every thing which it manifests to be righteous, holy, and acceptable to God our Creator, our beneficent Preserver, and final Judge.

2nd. They believe that the Christian religion is a religion of universal love ; and that, as the minds of men are, through divine assistance, gathered into this love, they become qualified to fulfil that injunction of Christ Jesus, the author of the Christian religion : “ Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you.” They believe that this truly noble and happy state of mind is not attainable in our own will and time ; but that, as mankind yield to the secret influences of that divine principle of light and grace in the heart, alluded to, they are favoured, more and more, to gain an ascendancy over self-love, and to witness an enlargement of heart, so as to desire the good of all, and that all may be brought to partake of that happiness which results from the favour and blessing of Almighty God.

3rd. They believe, that as this divine love has full place in the minds of any people, the

understanding becomes enlightened, so as clearly to see that all contention is out of the Truth, and out of the way of substantial happiness. And a desire accompanies these, that no part of their conduct may contribute to discord in any shape, either between families, between neighbours, or between nations; but being made sensible that all contention is evil, and that the continuance thereof interrupts the comfort of mankind, they desire to be preserved from doing any thing to keep it alive; and, consequently, to manifest by their conduct, that they believe it more consistent for the professed followers of Christ to take no active part in war; because war brings grievous calamity upon the earth, destroys the lives of our fellow-creatures, and tends to cherish that spirit of animosity and confusion which is inconsistent with the Gospel of peace.

4th. They believe that passage of the Sacred Writings to be particularly encouraging to those who profess faith in God, and in his divine providence and protection: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever;" and that the strongest bulwark to any nation, is the favour and protection of Him, who can save with equal ease in times of great

perplexity, as in seasons of less outward difficulty.

5th. They believe that the way to obtain this favour and protection, is to walk faithfully before Him; reverently depending upon Him, and in all things desiring that his will may be the rule and government of our lives. And they believe that, for a nation so walking and so depending, there is greater safety in this trust in the divine arm of power, than in the strength of armies; and that it is beautifully consistent for those in any nation who are thus convinced and thus believing, to endeavour, in humility and reverence, to cast their care upon Him, desiring to be resigned to every dispensation of his providence; and that, whatever happens, they may be found clear in his sight, of having contributed to the distress, the unspeakable distress and bloodshed of their fellow-creatures.

Extracts from Letters, &c.

1815.—12 mo. 29. I am not aware that Friends, as a Society, rate too highly the ground on which they are called to stand; although, unhappily, too many of us do not maintain our standing. And I think we may safely

believe this, without ascribing any thing to the creature, or magnifying the people; but reverently acquiescing with and acknowledging the Power whence the gifts and ability proceed.

If, by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, our predecessors were brought forth from amidst the different denominations of professors, and enabled to bear faithful and undeviating testimony to the spirituality of the Gospel—to the necessity of following the Captain of salvation, whithersoever He is pleased to lead by his light and truth manifested in the secret of the soul; in other words, in the path of self-denial and the daily cross—to the necessity of avoiding all conformity with formality, all unrighteous conformity to the maxims, policy, fashions, and friendships of the world—to hold up a standard against wars and against oaths, and a testimony to the freedom of gospel-ministry, and to that worship which, laying aside all rites and ceremonies, as constituted and proper appendages to the gospel dispensation, is performed in spirit and in truth:—If they have been brought to the blessed and glorious avowal, “That in pure, silent worship, we dwell under the holy Anointing, and feel Christ to be our Shepherd; that here the best of Teachers ministers to the several conditions of his flock, and the soul receives, immediately from the divine

Fountain, that with which it is nourished:— If this people have been brought thus far, surely it becomes the living among them, in the depth of humility, reverence, and fear, to say, as a collective body, “He that is mighty hath done for us great things, and holy is his name;”— has placed us in the midst of many mercies, in a state of awful responsibility. Are we not brought to the acknowledgment, that “the opening of an inward, silent worship in this nation, is a precious opening;” and that it is our duty to walk answerably to the nature of an inward communion with God, that so no stumbling-block, through us, may be laid in the way of others? The awfulness of the responsibility does not annul the truth of it; and I believe it is unsafe to flinch from or deny it.

I rejoice greatly in the spread of the Holy Scriptures, and in the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as a present, highly-favoured means of this spread. I am concerned, by word and example, to encourage Bible-meetings; and I think am never so comfortable, if I am prevented attending those to which, as appertaining to our district, I may be said to belong: I mean, our quarterly committees, and our anniversary at Saffron Walden. But I see great cause, indeed, for Friends to be very

watchful on such occasions. How conspicuous seems to be the fondness to give applause, if not to receive it; to say nothing of so liberally ascribing to the Bible, that which can rightly be ascribed only to the Divine Spirit. How humble, how deep in travail, then, had Friends need be, that they may be enabled to keep their ground—to support, yea, exalt their testimony to the necessity of help and strength from the Lord, for the advancement of his own cause. I believe they may be greatly useful in such assemblies, and, by the savour of their spirits, tend at times, more or less, to season others. But how great is the danger, lest, instead of communicating strength to others, we lose, in degree, our hold of the steadfastness and beauty of the pure and unchangeable Truth.

I believe, in a meeting for discipline, rightly gathered and rightly preserved, the united exercise of living members is, that Truth may prevail over all. To a meeting thus circumstanced, I believe at times, a very precious sensibility is vouchsafed, and Friends travel on in the simplicity of filial fear and reverence; and when a nomination is depending, Friends become, at times, constrained, at other times feel a tender, brotherly, sensible, freedom, to mention a name, without daring to stamp it

high; but, in resignation, leaving it to make its way, or otherwise, as the Master pleases; and leaving it with the meeting, whether the right savour attends the expression, and whether there may be a right capacity in the nominee, to accept or decline. Thus Friends feel one for another, and the bond of tender gospel-affection is preserved; and the travail for the cause maintained, and its prosperity sought, beyond all other considerations. Oh! one can seem to conceive what a precious thing it is, when Friends, in their meetings for discipline, can rightly bow under the solemnizing influence; not stamping any thing they do, high; but fearing, in the least degree, to wound the precious cause, or contribute to disperse the precious solemnity, either by speaking or by withholding. I speak not, very, very far from it, as one that has attained, but as a believer in the validity of these things; and in the favoured condition of rightly-gathered, and rightly-preserved meetings for discipline.

1817.—6 *mo.* Whether we be ministers, elders, overseers, or of whatever class, I believe we should mind where we are; and rather bear a burden, perhaps rightly brought upon us, from sympathy, or the operation and influence of the Spirit, than venture to relieve ourselves,

when circumstances and the want of opportunity forbid. I believe, in a large meeting, a diversity of exercise may be excited in lively-spirited Friends, which it would be very inexpedient to bring forth in words. But I suppose that the weighty, deeply-attentive, patient mind, is permitted to discover the right time for moving; and then, the baptizing influence being dwelt under in the exercise of the gift, the meeting feels the precious effect. But I rather think, that some who have a gift in the ministry, miss it at times, in the exercise of it, for want of understanding, at the time, the state of the meeting; perhaps, partly, from being involved in their own exercise. When a meeting is baptized under a living ministry, and the minister sits down, it is a nice thing indeed to make an addition; at least, before a suitable space has been allowed. As the end of all true ministry is to bring the hearers to an abiding under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, we should rejoice when this is in any considerable degree produced by the ministry of any Friend; and be very careful not to step in, in a way to dissipate the solemnity, or remove the sense which has thus profitably been begotten. At the same time, it is very desirable that no rightly-appointed offering should be prevented; and the diversity of states and conditions is to be

remembered. So that it is indeed a mystery; and a very weighty thing is living, baptizing, ministry.

I remember, whilst on this subject, a remark of dear Henry Tuke, in our quarterly meeting, a pretty many years ago, that he thought hardly a greater evil could befall us, as a religious society, than an unbaptized ministry. As to offerings in the ministry, rendered unseasonable from the circumstance of a meeting being in measure baptized by previous ministry, I believe, solid, judicious elders might be greatly helpful to our dear ministering friends of less experience: they are much to be felt for, and so are meetings.

1821.—5 mo. 19. My mind so sincerely entertains the belief, that all good cometh from God, and therefore must be patiently and reverently waited for, that I can heartily join in desire, that, in our meetings for discipline, the creature may be kept humble, simple, and dependent; looking for the blessing on its feeble endeavours, unto Him who is the Alpha and Omega, the inexhaustible source both of strength and consolation. It behoves the rightly exercised, to be especially careful to keep their posts in such meetings; that nothing draw them off their guard, or betray them into

movements unworthy of the faithful followers of the Lamb. The exercised frame of their spirits might be sweetly encouraging to younger, well-inclined Friends, and thus strength be progressively gained to the meeting. I am not sure whether it is possible, by words, to convince the gainsayers, if many such there be, that our meetings for discipline are divinely owned and crowned; but if those who know the Truth, and love it, would keep their ranks faithfully, with meekness and lowliness, yet in stability and gospel-beauty, it would, perhaps, go further than any thing else; and I believe these, rightly engaged, would be blessed in meetings, and meetings blessed in them.

I think, in meetings for discipline, made up of a great variety of states and conditions, it is a precious thing that we endeavour to gather into silence; and may we not consider the solemnity which sometimes prevails, to be like a mantle cast over us, preparatory to entering on the business, and to proceeding in order, as the subjects successively rise before us; and perhaps, in the condescension of Him who knows the circumstances and state of every mind, it may be permitted, that there should be an entering into the concerns of the meeting, by many, or by most present, according to their present capacity, growth, and attainment. And

in a degree of integrity and simplicity, without much religious experience in some, there may be a desire that the right thing may be promoted; and by these, a few words expressed, without offence or wound to the meeting.

1822.—11 *mo.* 17. May we not with reverence believe, when the Most High was pleased, in the going forth of his wisdom and of his mercy, to gather the religious society of which we have the unspeakable privilege of being members, that he proposed to bring them forth as a people, wholly separated from the apostasy, which had previously so overwhelmed the Christian world; giving, in a wonderful degree, light, and power to discern, exhibit, and faithfully testify against the spirit, and the fruits of that apostasy:—in other words, to call forth a people who should aim at perfection, in accordance with our blessed Saviour's injunction: "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:"—who should aim at a state of perfect acceptance with Him; compromising nothing; abating nothing; but pressing on, through all discouragement and opposition, towards the mark for the prize—the blessed prize of unalloyed peace.

If this were the case, can we wonder that they were very quick of discernment, respecting

any thing that came in their way, which was either in root or in branch, appertaining to the apostasy? As they sought the glory of God, they were very zealous against what they believed derogatory therefrom. As they loved the truth as it is in Jesus, they were grieved and offended at any thing which they thought militated against the purity and simplicity of it. The persecutions and trials which they met with, joined with the convictive evidence of Truth in their own minds, tended greatly to wean them from the world, and to fix their attention closely on promoting the glory of God; therein securing their own happiness, and conducting to the happiness of others in this life, and, finally, in that kingdom whereunto the robber and destroyer cannot come.

Can we, without tender emotion, contemplate what different conclusions will be produced respecting the same subjects, where, on one hand, a people are zealously, yet reverently and humbly, pursuing the glory of God, as the principal thing, or with an undivided aim; or where, on the other hand, the spirit, the maxims, and the enjoyments of the world, are claiming a very considerable proportion of the attention of the mind, and the strength of its faculties? In the former case, how nice, tender, and scrupulous,

that nothing be admitted, trenching at all upon their allegiance to God, and their testimony against whatever has sprung from the apostasy, or militates against the spirit of the Gospel of Christ; endeavouring to be faithful in every point, and being exceedingly jealous of whatever is either decidedly inconsistent with the purity of the Gospel, or that is of such a complexion. In the latter case, what nice distinctions are sought up, and found out; what subtle reasonings, tending to lessen suffering—to abate the distinction between the humble, devoted follower, and those who appear willing to run the hazard of that which may eventually distress, if not lay waste, the Society; keeping as near the world's maxims as they can, with tolerable satisfaction; and having, perhaps, the right eye towards it, and the left eye towards the kingdom everlasting.

CHAP. IV.

LETTERS AND OTHER PAPERS, ADDRESSED TO THOSE IN EARLY LIFE.

Tender Counsel to the Young.

IN looking towards the young men in our religious Society, and esteeming them a precious, and very interesting part of the body, I consider their preservation in the midst of the dangers of the world, a most worthy object of attention. I believe some of them, from circumstances which occur, are led, at an early age, into temptations and deviations, that eventually tend to their perplexity and distress; and that they, in many instances, lose a state of comparative innocence, before they are rightly aware of the value of themselves, and how much the sweetness and true enjoyment of life, are increased by humbly walking in the fear of God; not in slavish, but filial fear; for He is our gracious Father, and the fountain of all blessing.

I am inclined, in affectionate desire that they may not forfeit the substance of comfort, through a pursuit of the shadow, to recommend the following short hints :

I believe it is good for young men, to make a point of devoting a small portion of time—a few moments—every day, to read a little in the Holy Scriptures, and to endeavour to yield their minds, in sincerity, into a short calm and quiet. For, in divine loving-kindness, something may be vouchsafed and communicated, in these short seasons of mental recollection, which will, in degree, nourish and cherish the Divine Life in the soul, so that the Love of God will be felt to prevail a little ; and as this love is entertained, and found to increase, the love of the world, and the anxious desire after its enjoyments, will lessen, and the mind be prepared to take its chief delight in something spiritual and heavenly. This experience will prove a permanent treasure.

Thoughts on Company and Books.

I wish to feel for young people, under the various temptations and trials to which the years of inexperience are exposed. They are

naturally and reasonably inclined to learn, and to accomplish themselves in ornament and usefulness. To this end, as well as for temporary gratification, they value and prefer company and books. Most of them, perhaps, would say *good* company and *good* books; and it is a delicate and very interesting matter to determine in what degree to discourage or to countenance this inclination. It is an unspeakable favour, however, early in life, to know, that, in the silence and retirement of the mind, there is instruction and comfort to be met with, beyond what can be expected, either from even good company, or from good books. It is observable, by the attentive mind, that there may be an enjoyment of books and of company which strengthens us in the love, esteem, and pursuit of this silence and retirement; and there is an enjoyment of good books and good company, which weakens and enfeebles the mind, in its capacity to love, pursue, and enjoy this profitable silence and meditation. Here, then, dear young friend, whosoever thou art, is the point of wisdom. Mind, day by day, and through all, an inward sense respecting things, and thou mayst be favoured to perceive what thy duty calls for at thy hands, as to thy outward, temporal, domestic, or social occupations; and then what time thou canst properly spare for company

and books, and how much of either thou canst enjoy, with religious benefit to thy own mind. Much company and many books, or much reading, have often a direct tendency to draw the attention of the mind outward, instead of inward. And here there is need of wise discrimination. If thy company, or thy reading, tends to give thee a humbling view of thyself, and of thy many frailties and infirmities, and to increase the ardour of thy mind, in the pursuit of divine help, of inward quietude, and sweet, enriching peace, thou mayst conclude so much of it is good for thee; but if either of them be such, or indulged in to such a degree, as unprofitably to occupy thy mind, and rather indispose than encourage thee in the love of inward recollection and meditation, thou mayst safely conclude there is a snare in it, and that there is danger lest the durable and precious substance may be lost in the pursuit of the shadow.

The three following Letters were written to young men who lived with W. G. as apprentices.

1801.—9 mo. Being favoured to desire that thou, and the other young men, may be kept in a reverent, tender fear of offending the Lord

your Maker in any thing, I seemed most easy to attempt a few lines to thee, after this manner, without any wish to write much, but so as to reach the divine witness in thy mind.

I tenderly request thee to weigh these remarks solidly ; and at such time as thy mind is most favoured with good desires for thyself, and at such times as thou art favoured to crave that, when thou hast done with the things of time, thou mayst be found worthy to have a place in the mansions of eternal rest and peace. Now, I believe that the way to be truly happy, is to endeavour to do the will of God. The way to enjoy the blessings intended for his dear children, is to serve Him, and obey Him in child-like simplicity ; to dwell under a sense that He is our Father ; and to look up to Him, as He that can provide for us, take care of us, lead us, feed us, and keep us. To have this sense upon the mind is very precious, and is what I crave for me and mine, and those under my care. Here self is gradually reduced, and kept under ; and we are made sensible, that there is no safety for us, whatever may be our attainments, but as we are doing His will ; and as we are measurably clothed with a tender, filial fear, lest we should be found doing any thing that would deprive us of a sense of His love upon our spirits. As this is not at our command, so we are

led to prize it, when He is pleased to favour with it; and when it is withdrawn, and we are left barren, and poor, and stripped, and have nothing, as it were, to lean upon, and no feeling of inward support and comfort, oh! what poor things we are, let things in the outward be as they may, ever so fair and flourishing: they are fleeting and uncertain, wearing away one day after another, and leaving us in an unprofitable state, if we have not something within to animate and enliven our minds. As we come to make a right estimate of things, and are favoured to love the Truth above all, and to value a sweet and quiet mind, and the feeling of divine love upon our spirits, above the transient enjoyments of time, we come to feel and to know, that nothing is a little thing to us, which prevents us from drawing nigh to the Lord in our hearts, and offering up ourselves to Him in secret dedication, [saying,] "Here I am: make me to be thine, and preserve me from offending Thee in thought, word, or deed; that so Thou mayst be mercifully pleased to enrich my mind with the light of thy countenance, and to favour me with thy life-giving presence.

— As time is very uncertain to us all, both young and old, and we know not whether another opportunity so favourable may present, I feel a tender inclination, now, at parting, to tell thee, that I sincerely wish thee well ; and under that influence, to call thy attention to thy own immediate situation, that, by a discreet and timely consideration, thou mayst avoid some of the dangers to which I think thou art likely to be exposed. Thy time of life, and the time of a young man's engaging in the world for himself, is attended with many snares. Gilded prospects, which are calculated to deceive the inexperienced mind, if not strictly on its watch, are apt to present ; and a state of innocence liable to be interrupted, if not lost, which cannot be recovered but through deep suffering.

I apprehend thou art favoured to have a mother tenderly exercised in her spirit for thy good. This is a first-rate blessing. This was my case ; and the care and counsel of my dear mother, when I was very young, I believe, made impressions which have never been erased. She taught me early to know that I was not my own, nor at my own disposal ; and that, if I would be safe and happy, I must look to the Lord for counsel. Now this I wish for thee. In all thy movements, be sure keep this in

mind. It will, I trust, be an inestimable treasure to thee; confirming, in thy happy experience, that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, preserving from the snares of death. When temptations, of whatever description, assail, forget not the fear of the Lord; that thereby thou mayst be favoured to witness preservation, and escape. Be in earnest to be good;—the only way to be happy. If, through unwatchfulness at any time, thou art in any degree overcome, be sure thou be willing to come under condemnation, and bear the chastening hand for disobedience: be willing to endure affliction for transgression, and do not flinch from it. Let it have its appointed season; and the dispensation of condemnation will have a refining tendency, and thou wilt be likely to come up from the washing-pool, from time to time, with increased strength to resist succeeding temptations. We must not expect to be exempt from these. Bearing this reproof and chastisement will give thy mind weight and solidity; and thou wilt, I trust, come to be less and less susceptible of the allurements of the trifling things of the world, and thou wilt be more and more enabled to set a right value upon things. Unlawful things, and trifling things, will come to have their proper character stamped upon them, in thy view;

and thou wilt be likely to increase in thy love for quietness, watchfulness, and meditation. As we are sincere and in earnest, although the root of evil as well as of good lies deep in the heart, we may find that, as things of an outward nature are permitted to be snares and baits to our minds; so, many things of an outward nature are permitted to be religiously helps and comforts, and a strength to us, in our journey through time to an everlasting home. Thou wilt find that it is good to prefer the acquaintance of those who, thou believest, sincerely fear God, and to read such books as tend to bring our attention home, and to strengthen this fear in our own hearts. Light and frothy company, and light and frothy books, though specious, thou wilt find wound the peace of the mind, estrange it from the fear of which I have been speaking, and indispose to seriousness and heavenly-mindedness.

God is the source and centre of happiness. In proportion as we yield ourselves to things which the Light he has afforded us testifies against, in the secret of the soul, we go from Him, and go into confusion; and so miss of the mercies, the favours, the consolations, which He is permitting those to partake of, who dread nothing so much as losing his divine approbation, and the sweetness resulting from it.

Do not be halting, and double-minded, I entreat thee; but yield thyself up to be a consistent Friend, to speak, act, and appear as such, and I believe thou wilt be blessed.

When things present, bring them to the Light: if they will bear the test, we may conclude they make for lasting peace; if they will not, they make for perplexity, and, sooner or later, for distress.

My heart desires the illumination and strengthening of thy mind, to follow that which adorns the humble Christian, and to flee that which leavens into the spirit and friendship of the world, and ends in disappointment and sorrow. Dear — now is the time. Learn to weigh things correctly: often consult the pure witness in thy own heart: mark well and attentively what it leads to, and what it leads from; and may the blessing of preservation attend thee, is my heart's desire.

Thy well-wishing and affectionate friend,

W. G.

— As thou art about finishing thy apprenticeship, I have had it at times on my mind to express a few things in writing before we part; as what is written sometimes remains

longer under notice than what is spoken, and may be occasionally referred to, in moments of affectionate recollection of those with whom, and under whose care, so considerable and so important a portion of time has been passed.

I have no reason to think that thy coming to live with us was wrong; and I think it no small privilege that we have got through, so as to love one another at the conclusion; and I hope that, as we are preserved to desire well for ourselves, in the best sense, we shall continue, at seasons, to remember one another with pleasure and affection.

As to business, I hope thou hast attained a pretty competent knowledge of it; such as will, with humility and industry, under the divine blessing, promote thy getting, in due time, comfortably established for thyself. But my principal object, at present, is thy preservation out of those things which hinder or retard an advancement in the Truth; and if we miss of that, how transitory, and of how little value, is every thing else.

Thou hast much to be thankful for in the inestimable favour of a religious parent, who has solicitously cared for thy best welfare; and I think thy mind has been, through outward and inward means, so imbued with a sense of what is good and excellent, that, if thou art properly

watchful, thou wilt be blessed with an increase of spiritual knowledge and spiritual strength, and of capacity to overcome those propensities to which by nature we are prone. In order to this, I beseech thee in an especial manner, to be careful what company thou joinest with. I think thy own happiness much depends upon it. It was rather before thy time of life that my mind became seriously arrested, and a desire raised in me after the knowledge of substantial good. This good, dear —, is to be known, I believe, by submission to the cross of Christ, under which the divine light breaks in upon the mind with sweet instruction, to our edification and help. Though in this process our own wills are frequently opposed, yet it is here we are made acquainted with that which nothing else can give us. I believe the experience of many has proved this to be true. Suffer, therefore, nobody to deceive thee, or tempt thee to believe that there is any other way to be happy. In submission to the refining discipline of the cross of Christ, the mind is prepared to receive good from the divine hand, both inward and outward good, and to receive it with true relish and with thankfulness; and I think we shall not become happy without it. As the mind, by this refining submission, is brought into a state of fitness to receive, I be-

lieve that divine mercy and goodness is ready to bestow; and here a precious state is known. And as thou seest things thus, thou wilt find that it must, indeed, be good company, to be better than no company; and thou wilt find that too many young men, as well as older ones, are too much unacquainted with the state I have mentioned, and are more in speculation and reasoning than in living experience. But I entreat thee to keep to thy own business, and the peace of thy own mind; that is more to thee than any thing else: keeping steadily to meetings, and to the practices and conduct of faithful Friends. This will, I believe, tend to keep thee in favour both with God and man; and I believe that thou hardly needest fear doing well also in outward things. And as thou art favoured, more and more, to know what inward peace and quiet are, thou wilt be more afraid of those who know not what the Truth is by experience. The way of Truth, I believe, increases in brightness as we walk on faithfully in it, in humble submission to its discoveries. Here the creature is abased and kept in a teachable state, and those discoveries made, and that establishment known, which are no otherwise to be come at. Therefore mind, I beseech thee, the discoveries of Truth; and if, through unwatchfulness or infirmity, or natural propensity, thou at any time

slippest aside, be diligent, by repentance and submission to the rod, to get thy peace restored. Oh! the danger of letting commissions and omissions gather one upon another, for want of coming under the washing, purifying dispensation of the Spirit of Truth. How many have woefully missed it herein, and incurred a hardened state of mind, unsusceptible of the tendering impressions of good. But I desire thy preservation, and that thou mayst know an establishment in the blessed, unchangeable Truth.

In true love,

Thy sincere Friend,

W. G.

Extract of a Letter to two Young Men.

1815.—6 mo. 9. I think my sincere desire is, that the Father of mercies may take you and preserve you under his gracious care; and so renew, from time to time, his enlightening influence on your minds, as to enable you clearly to perceive the transcendent excellency that there is in the Truth; and to engage you to prefer it, and your advancement in it, to every other thing. It is cause of real satisfaction to me, that you are capable of business, and inclined

to be industrious and persevering. I think your attention to these lawful and commendable pursuits, under due regulations and restrictions, may not only prevent your active minds from being drawn out after things less innocent, but furnish you with ability to be useful to others. Nevertheless, I wish to remind and warn you, that temptations will not be wanting: the enemies of your own house, the propensities of our nature, will closely beset you in one shape or other, in one direction or other, adapting the bait to the circumstances, disposition, turn, and inclination.

Under this persuasion, how solicitous I am that you may be circumspect, and maintain a daily watch; so that preservation may be experienced on every hand. Often bear in mind, I tenderly entreat you, that our great and bountiful Creator's view, in the formation of his creature man, was to make him completely happy, by the enjoyment of Himself, his own presence, his own love, light, and peace: so that our greatest wisdom is to aim continually at this point, which is the great end of our being. If we are thus preserved, we shall endeavour to bear the trials, afflictions, and disappointments of this life, in such a manner as may bring us day by day, nearer, and nearer, and nearer to God, who is the perpetual fountain of happiness

and of consolation. In like manner, we shall endeavour to enjoy prosperity and the comforts of this life, and the many blessings which surround us, in such a sweet, thankful, humble frame of spirit, as will be well pleasing in the divine sight. We may be benefited, I believe, even by prosperity as well as by adversity, if the mind be kept in a state suited to our dependent condition; for dependent indeed we are, every moment of our days. Thus we may be brought on our journey, whether longer or shorter; so as that, whenever the end comes, either in middle or more advanced age, we may enter, through the divine mercy, into the fruition of that state, where there is neither want, sickness, nor pain; and where all tears are for ever wiped away.

We cannot too often look at things after this manner: we ought to do it daily, or oftener than the day. It does not unfit us for the concerns of time; but it leads us to give the preference where it is so justly due, and where our interest requires us. It leads us to desire, in sincerity of heart, that divine goodness will be near us, and help us in all states and conditions, and under all our temptations and trials; so that we may not lose our hold of good, but may continually advance, as our days spend and pass away, towards that which is the end and perfection of our being.

CHAP. V.

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS WRITTEN FROM
THE YEAR 1801 TO 1811; WITH SOME
OTHER PAPERS.

1800.—5th *mo.* 18. We are again come up to the yearly meeting; not, I trust, that we think, or thought before we set out, ourselves of much consequence here; but wish to think it a favour that we are once more permitted to mingle with Friends in their annual solemnity. Yet I remember that after all, we must, after partaking of the strength derived from the exercise and concern of the lovers of the cause, retire into our own littleness; live, if we do live, upon our own little morsel; and depend for daily help and daily supplies, as well as for final succour and acceptance, upon the mercy and favour of Him who knows all our infirmities; and who knows how far some of us are from that heavenly, redeemed state, which I believe many of us would gladly arrive at, however far we may yet be from a due willingness to submit to the terms. Well, my beloved friend, may the

sweetness of divine consolation be thy experience, to enliven thy declining years, support thee amidst the varied conflicts allotted, and sweeten the bitter cups which the diversified stage admits of to the travellers who are passing over it.

I remember at this time, a nice young man. Many dangers attend such as he is; a lively, pleasant activity for business; and no doubt many ready to associate with him. May he wisely remember how easy it is for the mind to be drawn into things, the enjoyment whereof is attended with no true sweetness, and which produce flatness and barrenness, if not bitterness in the end of them. May he remember, none are safe companions who have not the tender fear of God before their eyes; who do not endeavour to yield their minds to that cross which brings into exercise and conflict, and forbids a rest in sensual gratifications, which are vanity, and afford no substantial and enduring comfort.

I have thought that many would like to feel the comforts of religion, but miss it from expecting to find some great thing to begin with; whereas, perhaps the way appointed for most, is to begin with something very little; and it would be well, when our minds are exercised and grieved that we feel little or no capacity to-

wards good, to consider whether there is not something manifested that we are not yielding to. Perhaps this is the very thing which is to be the door of entrance into the path of life, and of increasing consolation, and experience of good.

1802.—8 *mo.* 6. One thing I seemed inclined to mention for thy encouragement; and that is, to request, affectionately, that thou wilt not let discouragements take place, as to the attendance of meetings for discipline at a distance, now that your borders as a quarterly meeting are enlarged, and the remoteness may be an additional bar to thy going. I believe thy company will be strengthening and encouraging to the rightly-concerned present, and their company reviving and consoling to thee. Let not thy deafness discourage thee; thy being, in measure, gathered into thy own exercise, will, I believe, help forward the cause. Even the countenance of an Israelite, I believe, strengthens many a drooping mind; and there are opportunities, now and then, though it may not be our lot to be very active, of manifesting on whose side we are. So that I am inclined, from some persuasion of its usefulness and fitness, to encourage those who, with thyself, sincerely love the cause of Truth, to keep close to it pub-

licly, even in declining days, as to age. Indeed, I have been of the mind for some time, that if things go on well, the more active part in our meetings for discipline will not always fall on those far advanced in years; but they will probably often sit by, and, like careful fathers and mothers, encourage by their presence and by their weighty spirits, the younger and middle-aged to come up in and maintain their respective ranks; and now and then, in the language of experience, put in a few words, well-seasoned and well-timed, to the increasing of the weight and solemnity. O! the use of the company of fathers, and mothers, my beloved friend, in our Society. O! the pleasantness of seeing the hoary head in our assemblies, having kept the faith, having loved the Truth, and believed in it to the end.

1803.—6 mo. 3. It was not pleasant to me that I did not either see or write to thee before I left London, which was not until the 28th. I have repeatedly had in view the expectation I gave thee of a little explanation of my views concerning the investigation of certain points which have often been considered as mysterious, and which I should gladly express in such a manner as would tend to thy satisfaction.

I am inclined to believe that it is not the de-

sign of unerring Wisdom, that the mind should be satisfied about these things, by the exertions of its own powers; but that he has wisely reserved to himself the communication of this satisfaction, dispensing it to the minds of his creatures, when, how, and in what degree he sees meet, from time to time. It seems that a real progress in divine knowledge is very differently to be attained and experienced, from what may generally be expected and desired by mankind. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.—See *John*, vii. 17.

It is very gratifying to the natural mind, to have a very full and comprehensive view of the subject of religion, at the beginning of the work; but the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ appears to be very differently intended to be opened to the mind; beginning, frequently, with a little light or manifestation of the divine will, as to some point or part of duty. And as obedience is yielded to this small manifestation, let it be respecting whatsoever it may, greater and greater degrees of light and of strength are afforded, to follow on to know more and more of the divine will, and of divine things. This is very humbling to the natural mind, which would willingly be getting on faster; but the real, divine manifestations of Light and of Life must be humbly

waited for, and the mind clothed with reverence and fear, lest it get on in its own wisdom, and mix something of its own with the communications of divine Light and Life; for it is well to remember, that "in Christ, (the Word) was Light, and that Light was the Life of men." Now as the mind is really favoured to believe that all good comes from God; and that its own conceivings and searchings, in its own wisdom and strength, will end in disappointment, and short of that clearness and evidence which truly satisfies, it is brought into a humble, waiting state; and in this reduced, dependent, humble state, as any thing is made known from the source of all true good, I believe a sweet, substantial, satisfying something will attend it, which all the exertions of the mind, in its own wisdom and activity, cannot afford. And as this comes to be really known and believed, a fear possesses the mind of entering into abstract speculation concerning divine things; preferring rather to wait, in humility and reverence, upon God; not doubting but He will be pleased, if we yield obedience, day by day, to the manifestations of his light in our minds, to make to us such discoveries as He judges best and most suitable for us.

Now, as the Holy Scriptures are read in this disposition of mind, depending on God, through

the spirit of Christ in the soul, for the opening of them to our understandings, we may, I believe, often be sweetly refreshed, comforted, and edified, even in reading a very few verses. And if we meet with any thing which is not quite clear to us, we may rather feel disposed to leave it, than to reason, search, and contrive concerning it. Thus thou wilt perceive that I believe the religion of Christ to be a religion of faith in Him; and that, as in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so, as we are brought into a state of true waiting and dependence upon Him, and upon the manifestations of his spirit in the soul, we are in the way to be rightly introduced, from time to time, into such degrees of knowledge in divine things, as is truly best for us, and best adapted to the state of our minds; and that it is not consistent with divine wisdom to communicate the treasures of heavenly mysteries, but as the mind becomes, through true obedience, refined and prepared for the reception of them.

1804.—7 mo. We find, as you do, the present scene and state of things greatly chequered. Many favours and many trials are our lot; and I am ready, at times, to wish that I may not expect to find it otherwise, having little room for

it. If I may judge from the fifty years which are passed over my head, what appears to be wanting is a more settled and firm abiding, where neither the storms and tempests, nor the sunshine of time and temporal matters can fully shake or move. For this experience I think I do long, and in measure, I think, pray that this longing may never, never be lost, until a perfect, abiding establishment be, through heavenly goodness, experienced. If the tossings and exercises which are met with, both by you and us, may but happily contribute to this establishment, what a favour and mercy will it be.

Is not the great thing which is wanting in our religious Society, an individual travail, a close attention to individual duty, whereby we should more experience a fitness and qualifications for collective service, as well as more availingly contribute to the advancement and spreading of Truth? But whilst I lament my own languor, I wish not, my dear friend, to discourage thee; but rather that we may unitedly be animated to lay hold of every offer of best help; and persevere, in increased and increasing hope and confidence, to the end.

1806.—3 *mo*. We have of late time had to wade along under many exercises and trials, not fully known to any but ourselves; yet I think we

have cause humbly to acknowledge that we have been permitted to hold up our heads, and not altogether to sink under discouragement. If the varied conflicts which we have, from time to time, to endure in our different allotments, do but happily tend to increase our acquaintance with the Supreme Good, and to strengthen our confidence in the divine superintending care and protection, it will be well; and we may have to acknowledge that it is good for us that we have been afflicted. I wish us to guard against unprofitable bewailing; and rather press on, in a grateful remembrance that we have many favours and blessings intermixed with the difficulties of the day.

It is, indeed, a nice thing, and requiring a portion of best wisdom, to know how to move along in temporal concerns. To be suitably alive to the useful discharge of our duty as to temporal matters, and yet to have the mind so detached from them as to have the one thing needful perpetually before us, is a most desirable attainment. Uncertainty is so stamped on all visible enjoyments, that we had need, indeed, to be solicitous to have our minds established on something beyond them all.

1806.—11 *mo.* 27. I consider it particularly

valuable to young men, to be placed, not only where they may be learning a pleasant and respectable business, which, under Providence, may be the means of procuring them a comfortable maintenance and provision in the world; but where their amusements and engagements, in the hours of relaxation from business, will be likely to be of the innocent and rational, as well as religiously-consistent kind. To fill up the hours of leisure rightly is a nice thing; and I hope thou wilt be especially careful of it, particularly in thy reading. I wish thee to read what thy master and mistress approve: such things as may be promotive of thy preservation in religious tenderness; and, when not of a religious nature, such things as will improve thy understanding, and enrich thy mind with profitable knowledge.

It is not unpleasant that the ground which was once my grandfather's, father's, and afterwards mine, is become the site of a meeting-house for Friends of Brighton: a place where it was, about fifty years ago, not very unlikely, looking outwardly, that there would be hardly any Friends to hold a meeting. I can remember, when I was a boy, sitting on a First-day by the widow Wilkins's fire-side, to hold our meeting: perhaps about five or six of us in number. There is great cause for encourage-

ment to Friends, both youth and elder, to be faithful to known duty; then, I believe, we shall indeed be blessed with increase both in numbers, strength, and dignity, with the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. Very early in life we may do something for this great and noblest of all causes, the promotion of Truth upon the earth. Abstaining from every appearance of evil, will give to a very youth a certain dignity of character; and will be accompanied with humility, which, indeed, is a most excellent adorning, and without which other qualifications and graces lose much of their beauty.

1810.—1 *mo.* 21. — Thus it is: we pass away one after another, and the place which has known us shall know us no more. I long that those in the vigour of life may increasingly bend to every discovery and manifestation of duty, which is the way to increase in religious strength. I think I never saw, more than lately, the usefulness and necessity of diligence to acquaint ourselves with that divine good, which alone can console and sustain the soul in the hour of trial and extremity; and I feel, whilst I write, desires that thou mayst, for one, prize the present day. Love retirement, and frequent, solemn introversion of mind; that so thou mayst increasingly see thy duty and service in

religious society, and be careful to do it with Christian magnanimity and faithfulness, showing, on all occasions, on whose side thou art, that thou mayst be an example and encouragement to others to do likewise. Time spends apace, and I am desirous thou mayst be a truly religious character in your large meeting. O! the beauty of an entire consistency: How does the example of such operate, within the sphere in which they move! How does it avail to their own individual good, the help of others, and the prosperity of the cause of Truth!

1810.—6 *mo.* 24. I understand thou hast a fresh companion, which, I apprehend, will be agreeable to thee; and I wish you may be strengthened to encourage one another in faithfulness to the requirings of Truth, and not the contrary; which is sometimes unhappily the case with young men taking countenance and encouragement from one another, in smaller or greater deviations from the simplicity of our noble profession. A sight and sense whereof, I believe thou hast been favoured with; and keeping faithful to what thou seest, is the way to have the understanding enlarged, and to see more into the law of liberty, precious liberty, wherein the mind is raised, in measure, above the bondage of this perishing, unstable world.

I desire thy preservation in innocence, and under the teaching of the best Preceptor; and though it may, at times, be to our humiliation, and we may be led along in a path of self-denial, yet, remember, none ever repent having timely and early submitted to his discipline; but many, many have to lament that they delayed the submission of their wills too long, and thereby increased their own difficulties.

1810.—7 *mo.* 25. Those manifestations intended for real, solid, and permanent good, are oftentimes in the cross to our own nature; but, as yielded to and obeyed, they tend to change our nature, even to introduce that nature which does the will of our Heavenly Father with delight. And I believe such are always blessed, and partake of substantial good, though it may be often mixed with trial—such being the terms of this life: “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” But remember the foregoing words: “these words I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.”

1810.—10 *mo.* 2. I notice thy remarks on the difficulty of keeping the mind under divine influence. I believe this is not in our power, or by any means at our command; but yet I think much depends on watchfulness, and religious,

tender care of our movements. As we keep humble and watchful, I believe the influences of good are more perceived and longer retained: the mind becomes more and more in love with them and desirous of them, and more afraid of things which indispose it to wait for them; and so it is that our nature becomes changed, and we, prepared to run the ways of the Lord's requirings; and our minds to be content with what is according to his will. So, my dear —, do not look too far before thee, nor suffer the suggestions of discouragement to prevail unprofitably; but remember, "Greater is He that is in thee, than he that is in the world." I desire thy encouragement to look to the Lord, and to believe that He will furnish the willing and obedient mind with ability to take one step after another in the way which is well pleasing to him, until a capacity is known to walk with a degree of blessed firmness and acceptance; although there is no state to be expected here beyond a state of humble watchfulness. May it be the happy experience of us all.

1811.—8 mo. 7. I hope, if permitted to accomplish your union, that you will be a comfort to each other, and that your principal care will be to walk in humility, reverence, and fear;

knowing, as we cannot but know, if we be wise, that uncertainty marks the path of man, and that our most precious and endearing enjoyments in the outward, are only rightly held and possessed, as they are held with humble gratitude.

It would be very pleasant to know ——— well settled: not that I consider that he may be losing time, unless it be in delaying to take up the cross, and follow, in humility and resignation of heart, the Saviour of men. I am ready to think that the likeliest way for many young men to get forward, as to an establishment in the world, is to seek earnestly and carefully after the pearl of greatest price, trusting in the divine promise: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." I rather think that many who may be steady, respectable characters, yet not submitting to all the terms needful for those who desire, above all things, to secure to themselves the divine blessing, prevent that substantial advancement, even in temporal things, which they would more easily be favoured with, if they were more weighty in spirit, and more fit to be placed in respectable stations at the head of families, having more or fewer young men under them. Could ——— come enough

to put his trust rightly in Him, to whom belongs the earth and the fulness thereof, and whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills, I think something would open; and it would be a comfort to see him, thus trusting and thus depending, settled for himself.

1811.—10 *mo.* As time passes over, we find fresh and fresh exercises brought over our minds; and I believe it is hardly safe to expect it will be otherwise, whilst we are conversant with the vicissitudes of time. The infirmities of our nature are a great trial; and we are very liable to have an addition, from unexpected circumstances, over which we do not appear to have any control; but, as in the outward, clouds and sunshine succeed each other, so it is with us. And I am in degree comforted at this time, in some little capacity to salute thee as a beloved elder sister, in the faith and tribulations of our present pilgrimage; in the tribulations common to mankind, and in the faith vouchsafed to the humble, exercised Christian. It is a very precious thing, that, although at times and seasons we are permitted to feel ourselves very destitute, tried, and deserted; and to be, as it were, enveloped in our own nothingness and infirmity; yet, that at other times, a sweet, sensible quiet is witnessed, and a degree of confi-

dence raised in the sustaining confidence of the Lord our God. Here there is no desire to feel ourselves strong and self-sufficient, or to feel the creature exalted ; but it is felt to be a mercy, and precious favour, that we can lean upon the divine arm of power, and trust in the source of true consolation. Here the waves and the billows are stilled ; and we are, as it were, ready to say, " What is become of our sorrows ? "

Well, my endeared friend, I believe thou hast abundant cause to trust in the Lord, and put thy confidence in the Holy one of Israel ; inasmuch as He has been thy fear and thy dread, thy shield, and the lifter up of thy head. What have we else to trust to ; however encompassed, however tossed and perplexed ? And I believe thou knowest, that sometimes, after a season of rather peculiar trial, comes a day of distinguishingly refreshing sweetness and calm. It is a great consolation, that sweetness and peaceful enjoyment are not inseparable from outward prosperity. Indeed, we may do well humbly to rejoice and be glad, that tribulation produceth the fruits of righteousness, if rightly endured ; but our nature shrinks from suffering.

—— Thy case and situation seem to require the kind attention of thy friends. Thy frequent neglect of meetings for worship bespeaks thy mind not to be in a tender, religious frame; but unguarded, and too indifferent about thy own everlasting good. There was a time, I believe, when thy mind was much more sensible of the benefit of attending meetings; and when thou wouldst have been afraid to be absent, except something particular prevented thy attendance. Now it seems a light matter: seldom more than once on a first-day, sometimes not once; and seldom on a week-day. It is not the way to gain strength in the best things, to neglect opportunities of waiting on the Lord. Remember the Scripture saying: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." But they who neglect to wait upon Him, are in danger of having their minds dissipated, and turned from good, and of coming to have a pleasure and delight in those things which once they esteemed not worth pursuing—things which bring no solid peace to the mind. These are accompanied with a sting, and with bitter remorse, unless the pure witness in the mind be so stifled and buried, that it be not heard nor understood, but blindness, darkness, and insensibility prevail. This is a dreadful state; but

I trust this is not thy situation. Yet, I think, if thou dost not speedily turn about, thou art in danger of losing the sense thou once mayst have had of the sweetness of a religious life and conversation. Light, unguarded company, is liable to be a sad snare to thee. Evil communications corrupt good manners; and we may be insensibly leavened, if not upon our guard, into the nature and spirit of those who do not walk in innocency. Thus, one thing after another, of which thy judgment may have been convinced, may be called in question; plainness and sincerity of speech, plainness of apparel, simplicity and innocency of manners, may all be departed from; and thy poor mind be exposed to many, many dangers and temptations, from which thou mightst have been preserved, if thou hadst carefully maintained the watch;—if thou hadst fled from every appearance of evil, and been afraid of having the tenderness and sensibility of thy mind hurt, by touching and partaking of things of which thou once sawest the evil and inconsistency.

Do not be deceived, or believe any one to be thy true friend who would rejoice to see thee dishonour thy profession, or set light by any tender, religious scruple. It is a great favour and blessing to have a tender mind, fearful of doing any thing to offend our Maker; and

those who know not the value of this tenderness of mind, and would willingly rob us of it, are to be guarded against as dangerous companions.

I do not mention this because I believe thou hast not once known it to be true ; but I believe thou hast opened an ear to that which, if followed, will lead thee into confusion, if not to ruin ; confusion as to the state of thy mind, and as to thy profession as a Friend ; and, perhaps, confusion as to thy outward concerns.

I see nothing but that the situation at — might afford thee a competent livelihood, if properly minded ; but it will require care. It will, I believe, require thee to be frugal and careful in thy expenses, careful of thy time, regular and punctual in doing thy business, and steady in attention to it. If thou art too often from home, thou mayst lose more in two or three hours, than will be got again in a week. By all means, be consistent. Do not seem one thing, and be another. Be an industrious tradesman, and mind thy business. Let hardly any thing call thee from it, except thy religious duty ; and take care to give a suitable preference to this duty, above every thing. This will make thee careful how thou conductest thyself in thy business, with punctuality, honesty, integrity, and humility. Thou wilt fear

to dishonour thy profession in thy words or in thy ways, and this is the way for thy neighbours to have a confidence in thee ; for though some may scoff at, and deride the way of Truth and of simplicity, yet all like to have to do with those whom they can depend upon, and who they really believe are preserved by a principle of integrity, from doing them an injury, even if they had it in their power.

Do not despise little things, as some may call them ; remembering, "he that despiseth the day of small things, shall fall by little and little." And by little and little, thou mayst get so far from the right way, as never more to return to it : thou mayst depart from the way of innocence, the way of plainness, the way of humility, the way of safety, so far as to have, in the end, to lie down in sorrow, and to wish that thou hadst never known better things, rather than, having known them, to depart from them, and trample upon them.

I believe thy situation very dangerous, and requiring particular watchfulness and resolution ; because thou hast, I believe, opened thy heart to some things of an evil tendency ; and that will, if not speedily and firmly stood against, tend to the blinding and darkening of thy understanding.

I think I need not make any apology for this

friendly freedom ; as I did not see that I could be clear in my duty to thee, without submitting a few hints to thy very serious perusal.

With desires for thy real good,

Thy respectful Friend,

W. G.

Religion is a very serious thing, and by a great man is, I think, thus defined : " Religion is the fear of God, and its demonstration good works ; and faith is the root of both." Religion, therefore, taken in this sense, which I think is the true sense, is one thing ; profession is another. A man may, at his own option, and against conviction, change his profession ; but his religion he cannot so easily change. If a man is religious, he fears God his Creator ; fears to offend him in thought, word, or deed, and considers himself bound to walk conformably to this fear. Now, according to the degree of true light upon the understanding, is a man's religion. He cannot, at his option, change the convictions of this light ; though he may act in opposition to them, and thereby incur condemnation. If a man does not fear God, I conclude he has no religion ; if he does fear God, and walks answerably thereto, he endeavours to act

according to the best evidence afforded to his understanding, as to what is, and what is not, agreeable to the will of his Creator concerning him. Thus, if I am not mistaken, a man cannot, at his own option, change his religion; although, as he can act in opposition to what is really the religion of his judgment, he can, if he be not conscientious, change his profession.

We believe, as a religious Society, that the duty of a religious man is to endeavour to know his duty as a Christian, both as to matter and mode, and then carefully and conscientiously to do it. Forms of profession may be various; but the truly pious, of all denominations, are, I believe, near akin. They unite in one grand and fundamental respect;—a sincere desire that their whole lives may be conformable to the will of their Creator. This desire embraces not only spiritual, but temporal things; and, with regard to their religion, not only the life and substance, but also the form and profession of it.

It may well appear strange and wonderful to the believing mind, that the sceptic should not discover it to be a more reasonable conclusion, that that Divine Being, whom we contemplate as

self-existent, omnipotent, and omnipresent, of infinite wisdom and goodness, the centre and essence of all created existence, in whom, therefore, we live, and move, and have our being, should be ever mindful of those rational creatures whom he had brought into existence ;— that it should not strike them, as consistent with a Being of infinite purity and infinite wisdom, who is ever inseparably near, to adapt his sensible influences to the varied circumstances of a creature so fallible, so liable to error as man ; rather than to leave him to himself, to find his way through this life, and to conduct himself in it, by means of any faculties entrusted absolutely to him. That he has faculties, and a capacity entrusted to him, there need be no doubt ; but he has, surely, need of a regulating, superintending, all-intelligent Preserver, to encourage, to check, to reprove, to animate, to stimulate, to restrain, to cherish, to console, according to the various circumstances to which the creature may be subject, either from causes over which it has no control, or from the wanderings and errors incident to humanity.

That there is such an influencing principle is the supreme joy of the just, who live by faith ; and it may well be matter of admiration to them, that the sceptic cannot believe that it exists, or that it is possible it should exist. Well,

now, suppose the sceptic should begin to believe that such a thing is possible; and then let him imagine, that some who have taken a different path to himself, have really found, by experience—by experience so often repeated as to have become undoubted proof to them, that such a precious, such a powerful principle does exist; and not only exist, but does act influentially for their good, to their humble and thankful admiration. After this, is it not highly reasonable for him to conclude, that, in admitting the doubts which he has entertained, he has been unwise?—that he has shut up the way to his experiencing what others have come to know?

Suppose again, that those who have come to this experience, (for, after all, experience is the great baffler of speculation,) do find in the Scriptures abundant testimonies to an inward experience of this same living, active, and influential principle in the hearts of others, which they believe they have found in themselves, is it not highly reasonable that they should entertain an extraordinary value for these writings; and that, finding so much in them which they cannot but highly approve, and which they cannot doubt the truth of, they are very fearful of underrating them, and thereby depriving themselves of the help, the consolation, and advan-

tage to be derived from them? These writings give their believing reader to understand, that this pure, active, influential, regulating principle, is the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of Immanuel, God with us: in other words, that dispensation, revelation, or display of the divine nature, life, and power, which is adapted to the situation, the benefit, the exigencies, of created intelligences. And these believing readers, finding that the power which acts in them, which influences, incites, reproveth, restrains, and comforts, eventually tends to good, they cannot doubt that it is divine—that it is of God. Hence arises an increased value and esteem for these writings, as testifying of a divine principle so precious, and of the experience of others respecting it, and of its power and virtue, so corresponding with their own views and experience of its excellency, and of its refining, sanctifying tendency.

CHAP. VI.

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS, WRITTEN FROM
THE YEAR 1812 TO 1819.

1812.—1 *mo.* 4. Many are the ways by which our poor minds are liable to be brought into trouble; I think I know this, not only from the relation of others, but from my own repeated experience. Sometimes inadvertencies of our own become a source of affliction and distress; and sometimes this is accompanied with infirmity both of body and mind; and, from these complicated causes, the poor creature is plunged into unspeakable perplexity, from which it sees no way or probability of escape; and is hoping sometimes for relief one way, and sometimes another, but no permanent quiet can be obtained. Like the sea, that unstable element, whose billows run very high, and wave upon wave, so rest and quiet seem to have taken their leave of us. But as man did not form, or create himself; so, neither can he deliver or

preserve himself. Yet, I believe, in these seasons of deep distress, poor mortals are under the immediate and peculiar notice of the Most High; and, in the language of one of his favoured servants, we may say, "There is none so nigh sinking, but He puts his hand under their head." He knows all our difficulties and perplexities; He marks our solitary wanderings, and sees the path which we take. O! then, from whatever causes our distresses arise, whether ever so simple or ever so complicated, it is good, it is safe, it is most wise to trust in Him, to cast our care upon Him, who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust; and by whom, in the emphatical language of our blessed Lord, "the very hairs of our head are all numbered." The great thing is, and I hope, as thou tenderly desirest it, thou wilt more and more experience it to be a truth;—the great thing is, to endeavour to be still and wait for his salvation, under a humble, but quiet sense of our own inability to help ourselves. Guard against impatience or activity, but crave to be favoured with stillness. Let the billows pass over, and wave upon wave; but keep thou in the quiet habitation, and wait to see what will become of the storm. Do not imagine that thou canst still the tempest, nor attempt in thy own strength to do it; but

endeavour to stay thy mind on Him who formerly, when his poor disciples were in dismay, said to the wind and the waves, "Peace, be still; and there was a great calm; and they were filled with wonder, and cried out, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him."

1812.—9 *mo.* 20. I think that, on both sides of the middle path of life, there is great danger of mixing with the spirit of the world. It is very observable, that abundance of the good things of this life, that ease, and large acquisitions of knowledge, have that tendency. On the other hand, where there is a great want of literary qualification, where there is rusticity of manners, and a necessity to be plodding hard for a livelihood, and where temporal conveniences are but poorly supplied after all, there is a great liability for the mind to be let down into the same state, at least in degree, as we too often see amongst the poorer classes of the people at large. Not but that Truth, which is omnipotent to all good purposes, is fully equal to preserve in all right allotments. But how shall we in the middle stations, be sufficiently thankful that the "lines have fallen to us in pleasant places,"—in profitable places, may I not say.

It seems to be the great thing wanting in myself, and I suppose in the Society, a capacity rightly, and therefore availingly, to pray; but we must look forward, and press forward: having put our hands to the plough, it will not do to look back.

That "we are not our own;" that we are not to gird ourselves, and walk whithersoever we list, is a truth so clear and evident to the enlightened mind, that it should be, I think, almost a first principle in education, in doctrine, in the habitual frame of the mind. But who are sufficient for these things?

May you be favoured to get into that spot where, the eye being kept single, the body is full of light;—where the earnest desire and breathing of every one is, that no one may be wounded or hurt;—where the willingness to part with selfish views is known;—where the preservation of love, harmony, and sweetness, is felt to be more precious than any outward good; and where the mind craves, above all things, that every movement may be agreeable to the will of our Heavenly Father, and tend to his honour and glory, and the promotion of the cause of peace and righteousness. And I sincerely question, whether there be any way in which we more acceptably serve Him, than when, in the transaction of our outward affairs,

we are preserved in meekness, quietness, and self-denial, with our eye and desire to Him, for guidance, limitation, and protection.

1812.—11 *mo.* 29. The principle of light, life, and power, as submitted to, more and more leads the awakened and dedicated mind out of a conformity to the maxims and manners of the world, by a path of humble self-denial, to the enjoyment of a peace which is substantial, sweet, and precious. Press after it, my dear friend : press into the enjoyment of it : whatsoever sacrifices are required, I entreat thee to make them through the renewings of best help. Do not embitter thy future days, by persevering in opposition to the clear manifestations of the light of Truth. Get not into abstract reasonings on things ; but eye the light, and follow it, step by step, as the way is opened for thy complete deliverance.

How precious it is, my dear friend, in important movements, to feel a humble, reverent, filial trust in the divine blessing on our undertakings ; and though, at times, we may not be favoured with very clear and strong light upon our path, yet, being preserved in a fear of offending, and in a sense that, without the divine blessing upon it, all our acquisitions and

enjoyments will have a void, a painful void, here we are in the way of safety. There is, may I not say, an indescribable distinction between those who have really believed in the reality of divine, inward, immediate communication to the soul, and those who have not. Faith in this divine gift is a most precious thing—a most valuable treasure; not to be trifled with; not to be bartered away; but to be reverently, humbly, and perseveringly treasured up, improved, and lived upon. Remember this, my dear friend; and may heavenly goodness be near to help, direct, and sustain thee. Amen.

1813.—2 mo. 18. ——— Our principles are calculated to inspire love, esteem, and confidence; inasmuch, as they point to humility, a general, courteous behaviour to all, and to strict punctuality. How do I desire that * * and * may be favoured to keep little and thankful; sensible what a favour it is to be enabled to procure, by industry and attention, a comfortable competency, and at the same time sensible also that this is not all that we want to make us truly useful and happy. Uncertainty attends the most flattering outward prospects. Young men engaging in business are much to be felt for and sympathized with, that they may be preserved from unprofitable depression on the

one hand, and undue elevation on the other: happy if they can be preserved, using their best, honest, and upright endeavours; whilst they feel a dependence on our Heavenly Father, for the needful supplies of strength of body and mind; of prudence, of discretion, and well-regulated affections and desires.

1813.—3 mo. 2. In the flowings of love, and in the enlargement or expansion of the mind, we may, I believe, sometimes be ready to recommend writings which are really very estimable; and yet in which, from the first word to the last, perhaps there is not a single pointing to the Word nigh in the heart, the divine gift, or light of Christ. Does it not require great care how such are recommended? I write with caution, not wishing to prevent any good; but it wants to be more understood in the world, (and what if this be one of the great ends of our being raised up,) that it is not comprehending sublime truths, even the truths of the Gospel, so much as seeing and knowing our own individual part of the great whole, that is the grand *desideratum* for us all; and which, do we not allow, cannot any way be so well known, as by diligent attention to this divine gift? Attending to this divine gift in

ourselves, and so being drawn and kept under its influence, it becomes our element, and we move healthfully and safely along in it. And in this element, not out of it, we may look at many things, and touch many things, perhaps without spiritual loss, and possibly with spiritual advantage; but the danger and the loss seem to be from meddling with religious and spiritual things, out of this element. Keeping in this element, we are in the way of feeling the liberty of Truth, and its blessed restraints, as to touching, tasting, or handling this, that, or the other thing, that is thrown in our way.

1813.—11 *mo.* 12. It is indeed occasion for thankfulness, that thou art permitted to report so favourably, which I hope may continue to be the case, as thou art preserved desirous that thy days may be spent in humility, watchfulness, and fear; so that the blessing may attend thy honest and upright endeavours. There is a fear lest any right endeavours on our part should be wanting, which, I believe, is acceptable in the divine sight, and tends to preservation; and there is an anxiety and earnestness, which, I believe, wounds the religious mind, and is not fruitful of good. So that the prayer formerly put up is emphatically adapted to the Christian traveller of all generations: "Give

me neither riches nor poverty, but feed me with food convenient for me." And I am glad thou art favoured to be connected with those who, whilst they are caring that temporal matters may be prudently and reputably ordered, are desirous of giving the upper hand to those things which perish not with the using; but which are necessary to be sought after, cherished, and preferred, whether our allotment, as to the outward, be in prosperity or adversity. I sincerely desire your preservation, and that the best blessing may attend and enrich your minds: so may the effects thereof be increasingly your happy experience; even meekness, patience, contentment, sweetness, love.

I am sorry for the account of poor ——'s misconduct. I am in hopes that separation and restraint from improper company may place her in a capacity to discern more distinctly wherein true happiness consists, and the path which leads to it. Speaking on the subject, I am reminded of the experience of that dignified disciple of the great Master, Isaac Penington, where I think he describes himself as in a state of mourning for all the miserable, however deservedly so.

It was very pleasant to hear so agreeable an account of ——, for whose preservation out of every hurtful thing, we can unite with you in

desire. And I wish he may be favoured to see what a privilege it is to be comfortably introduced into business, without the hazard, to which many suffer themselves to be exposed, of convulsive shocks, which endanger both temporal and spiritual comfort. He seems to have slid into an establishment very easily, and perhaps with as much encouragement as is desirable. I hope nothing will be permitted to take him off his feet, either prosperity or adversity, for there are snares in both; but that, by endeavouring to appreciate the favours received, he may set a proper, not an improper, value upon them, and see the necessity of watchfulness in every stage of his progress, if he would be kept from wandering, and know an advancement in the pursuit and enjoyment of substantial good, temporally and spiritually.

“ Oh! the long list of mercies undeserved,
And oh! what greater gifts are still reserved.”

So that there is abundant encouragement to those who are humbly in the pursuit of happiness, within the limits and appointment of that Wisdom and Goodness which are infinite.

1815.—2 mo. 16. In the first place, and pre-eminently, I seem anxious, my dear —, to say, that if thou wert to be induced to leave

—, I should entertain little doubt but that an enemy had done it. When, through the permission of a kind and gracious Providence, we are so situated as to be not only comfortably provided for, set down with comparative safety, and free from the risks to which many are exposed, which greatly agitate and prevent a religious growth; but are also in the way to make a reasonable, and even a handsome, provision for that time of life, if permitted to reach it, when much exertion would be inconvenient, if not unsuitable:—when we are thus circumstanced, how needful it is for the religiously-visited mind to labour after a state not only of content, but of gratitude; and in the very depth of sincerity, on any contemplation of a change, to say, “O Lord, I beseech thee, if thy presence go not with me, carry me not hence.” Oh! the many ways there are by which we may be betrayed from a state of humility and reverence of mind, and drawn out of the land of Goshen, the spot appointed for the children of promise, into the land of Egyptian captivity, where confusion and darkness prevail, a darkness which may be felt. My heart, I think, in measure, travails for thy preservation out of those things that lift up the mind, prompting to aspire after great things; and unfitting, disqualifying, to sit, in a lowly posture, at the feet of

Jesus, the holy example of obedience and self-denial.

With me it is a very tender thing for any visited mind to leave a situation, in which the blessing has not been withheld, inwardly and outwardly. It is, I think, a ready way for the ungrateful receiver to experience a withering as to the divine life, and often lamentable miscarriage as to the outward.

Oh! the safety, the unspeakable advantage of keeping heaven uppermost, and the earth undermost. May this never be unhappily reversed in me, or any, for whose welfare I am particularly concerned.

1816.—9 *mo.* 19. I hope, with moderate industry and prudent care, you will be permitted, if your days are prolonged, to continue making some additions to your property; thereby enlarging your sphere of usefulness, as well as increasing your comfort. Much riches I do not covet for you: they are not necessary for our sweetest enjoyments. Supineness and inattention are productive of very little good; but moderate application, in a reliance on the blessing of Providence upon our humble and upright endeavours, adds much to our comfort, keeping our faculties bright, and even, I believe, the

the more susceptible of good. I wish your comfort, and that you may rightly appreciate the time and opportunity put into your hands, wisely *applying* your attention between spiritual and temporal things. I had written *dividing*, but I drew the pen over it, thinking the expression exceptionable; because I believe we may be favoured to have our minds so preserved, as to maintain an undivided preference for that which is best of all, (though necessarily engaged, and rightly so, in the concerns of this life,) and to feel that we have indeed a connexion with ever and ever, whilst we are conversant with the vicissitudes of an earthly pilgrimage.

1816.—10 mo. 13. Oh! that we who move in comparatively narrow circles, may be enabled to pray for the consolation, protection, and safe guidance of those who go forth as with their lives in their hand, [to scatter gospel truths] and move in distant regions, amongst strangers, and even people of strange language.

What a favour, when afflictions tend to refine and purify, and make us fit for a state of never-ending felicity, with those who having served God in their generation, and loved the brethren, have entered into glory.

“ Oh ! human life, how mutable, how vain !
How thy wide sorrows circumscribe thy joy :
A sunny island on a stormy main,
A spot of azure in a cloudy sky.”

And yet I seem inclined to add also a prose quotation from another writer, and say : “ How delightfully pleasant and sweet has Providence made the seat of man’s probation.”

1816.—12 mo. 28. It is a very interesting and momentous time for you; and I suppose you hardly ever had more occasion for best wisdom to direct your deliberations, that all may be done in sweetness, harmony, and love, as well as with wisdom and a sound mind. I desire your preservation and ours on every hand, that true happiness and comfort may be your peaceful portion and ours, and, in the end, your and our enriching crown. I believe, in order for this, it is needful to dwell very low, where the right discernment is given; and the feeling known, whereby a capacity to distinguish is attained, and preservation witnessed.

As you desire in simplicity so to move as you believe will be the readiest way to solid peace, I hope and believe that a blessing will attend you. When the mind is preserved in a watchful care to do right, and is fearful of wounding its own solid peace, I believe that, although

many perplexities may be permitted to attend the path which we tread, yet He who sees us and knows our thoughts, and who, as a Father pitieth his children, pitieth those that fear Him, will remember us in an accepted time, and be as a hiding-place from the storm. So that it is good to trust in Him at all times, and to endeavour to walk, as we believe, considering our respective circumstances, will be acceptable in his holy sight.

My desire is, that you may study moderation in your pursuit of business; not stretching your arms very wide; endeavouring to carry a snug sail, as the safest in stormy weather; not hazarding the peace and composure, the solid happiness, of your minds, for any specious and glittering, but uncertain and dangerous prospects. Be content with what you can, through favour, compass, and compass with satisfaction.

1817.—3 mo. 20. A tender sensibility, and a disposition raised in the mind to crave and press after that which can be depended on as substantial, sustaining food, is very precious. It introduces into the exercise of that faith which becomes, from time to time, the Christian's victory, and, through heavenly goodness, his eventual triumph. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

My object seems to be to express a desire that thou mayst indeed be preserved in a state of humble dependence on the divine arm of Omnipotence; not seeking or desiring great attainments, but preservation near to that which has visited; believing that in that are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, ready to be handed forth according to the good will and pleasure of Him who doeth all things well. Mayst thou live in a state of watchfulness for the unfoldings of heavenly counsel, as mercifully, from time to time, and at any time, vouchsafed; desiring also to increase in subjection of the will, and in well-timed obedience. To the obedient mind, I believe, the unfoldings of heavenly counsel are vouchsafed, in a way and time suited to our condition.

Considering how supremely needful it is for the religiously-visited mind to attend to its own peculiar exercise, I have felt solicitous that nothing, however specious, might involve thee in unprofitable speculation. This does not go to the prevention of the exercise of our mental faculties, as rational creatures, but to the exciting of great watchfulness and care, to distinguish what, in our mental pursuits, makes for peace, and what does not. There is a precious saying: "As many as are bap-

tized into Christ, have put on Christ." It is a great favour to have, in any measure, put him on; and greatly, I believe, will it tend to our safety, to be pretty sure that we do not put Him, the beloved of souls, off, and clothe ourselves with something else, in any of our pursuits, even those which have a religious or spiritual semblance.

1818.—11 *mo.* 10. Probably some of those having the care of youth, and heads of families, among whom I include myself, have not enough been concerned to watch the openings of right capacity in themselves to convey, and the openings of right capacity in the youth to receive, lively instruction; and it appears to me, that this watchfulness for the opening, is the thing wanted among us. It is, I believe, a humbling, heart work, and would greatly promote the growth both of guardians and their charge.

— Amidst the contemplation of the subject of religious instruction, I have remembered with some comfort, those expressions of our blessed Lord to his followers: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and I think it certainly requires care, how we press religious truths too far beyond the religious capacity of young people; perhaps not possessing the essential preparation

for the reception of diffuse religious instruction, a resignation of the mind to bear the cross. To excite a willingness to bear the cross, with an eye to the crown, I consider a first principle in Christian education. If I am not mistaken, it has often been inculcated as a sound principle, not to puzzle ourselves too much to comprehend doctrinal passages of Scripture; but to leave them to be opened to our understandings, if needful, in the due and acceptable time.

— I think, my dear friend, though I have said so much, (I fear too much for me,) I should scarcely be satisfied without now suggesting one idea that has often presented, respecting the instruction of our young people: *viz.* I fear the public recommendation of any specific plan, for obvious reasons; but when one individual, or more, see their way to set about it, within their own sphere of action, I think it may be useful and safe; because this may be continued and prosecuted, as far and as long as the oil flows; and when it ceases, procedure may be dropped, or contracted, as freedom warrants. And if the blessing is on it, we may safely trust that it will be productive of benefit, and that the example will be influential, and perhaps widely so. This latter remark may, in degree, apply also to pressing the reading of Friends' writings. A thirst for good will naturally lead to this. To

excite this thirst, then, seems the first object. To a mind not thirsty, Friends' writings are, I believe, often very dull and insipid : to a mind in which the thirst is excited, they are, indeed, as a brook by the way ; very precious, very sweet, very reviving.

Leaving this, shall I mention without wearying thee, that it has lately occurred to me, that an advantage might be derived from pleading our belief in the Divine omnipresence, as one reason of our silent waiting in our meetings, and at other times : namely, because we believe that He is ever near us ; that He is ever over us, round about us ; and because in Him we live, and move, and have our being ? And although we are not at all times permitted to be sensible of his presence, yet, whenever it pleases Him, He can make us perceive it, as in the twinkling of an eye, and comfort us with his light and love. And believing that this perception of his love is our greatest good, and not at all at our command, we find it our duty and our interest, knowing that He is ever nigh at hand, to wait his time and pleasure for making us sensible of it. And when He is pleased to bless us, and to bow our minds, and the faculties of the soul, in reverence and prostration, under a sense of his goodness, and of our absolute need of Him and dependence upon Him, then we

believe is performed in us, and by us, that worship which is acceptable unto Him. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. And in order that this worship may, from time to time, be performed in the newness of life, it must be in fresh ability, which He giveth, or rather lendeth; for He does not bestow it as an abiding capacity, to be exercised in our will and time; but it must be from time to time, humbly and patiently waited for. Would it not be a likely thing to impress this view of the Omnipresence on the minds of young people, as most precious and consolatory, and as that which should inspire us with awe, and reverence, and abasement on one hand, and with animation and confidence on the other.

1818.—11 *mo.* 25. My sincere desire is, that the circumstances which have occurred may be sanctified to you; that the blessing of Providence may be over you, and round about you; and that the blessings of love, harmony, and peace, on a right and pure foundation, may be your enriching experience. I feel for your prosperity on a right ground so sincerely, that I return again to that subject. Keep low and humble, and attentive to best instruction in the secret of your own minds; and then, I hope,

preservation will be vouchsafed to you. Do not crave great things. Remember the saying of a worthy character: "I desire not riches, but to owe nothing." Thou knowest I like commendable industry. The sluggard cannot reasonably expect to prosper; but then our eye, and the dependence of our minds, should be to the Lord, and to his blessing upon our honest, upright, and moderately-circumscribed endeavours. In any material and important movement, consult us with much openness and unreserved freedom, as we desire thy preservation on every hand. I believe all right situations have their attendant probations; and however we may move, we must not expect to be without them. Trials bring weight; and a weighty mind is a great blessing.

It is a matter of sincere regret that ——— has so much travelling. I am well aware of its unsettling and injurious tendency, as it respects the humble, tender, well-regulated state of the mind of almost any Friend.

1819.—1 *mo.* 23. I have entertained some fear, lest I had not properly expressed my own views and wishes, on some part of the subjects touched upon in my communication of the 11th month*; particularly that of encouraging young

* See the last preceding letter but one, page 109.

persons to read the writings of our early Friends. Perhaps no one wishes more sincerely than myself, to see this practice prevail among our young Friends, as well as those more advanced. It is particularly cordial to me to see young people so engaged; and I desire it may be encouraged in every proper way. There are many ways, doubtless, of doing this; and I feel anxious that nothing which has escaped my pen may discourage any honest and upright endeavour to promote this object. Many of the writings of our worthy predecessors, with some of those of later date, I esteem an invaluable treasure to the Society, not to say to the world; and my desire is, that they may be duly appreciated by all ranks amongst us.

I am fully aware that a careful parent or guardian may very suitably recommend or use Friends' writings as one means, and a very likely means, to excite and increase the thirst here spoken of; and perhaps, just in this place, I may not improperly tell thee, that this morning, just when I was thinking to address thee, I very unexpectedly cast my eye on a few lines, which I some time ago penned, and which I had quite forgotten, to the following import: they may seem somewhat illustrative of my view of this matter. "If the mind is directed to that which is good, becoming tender in the fear of the

Lord, expecting all good from Him as the everlasting fountain of happiness, peace, and comfort, there is a good foundation laid for receiving the openings of Truth, either immediately by the Spirit, or instrumentally by the Scriptures, ministry, or good books."

1819.—9 *mo.* 18. We have often cause for thankfulness, when we can remember any past opportunity with sweetness and satisfaction in the retrospect. This has been the case with respect to thy late visit to us. It left me tenderly interested about thee: so much so, that I seemed as if I might not do safely, if I omitted telling thee so. I think I am not mistaken in believing that thy mind often possesses a precious sensibility of desire after good,—after peace and substantial happiness. And oh! the longing that I have felt that nothing may be permitted to quench this desire in thy heart; but rather that it may grow and increase, until nothing, nothing in this world, may bear any comparison with it in thy estimation. Endeavour, I beseech thee, to keep thy mind inward unto the Lord. Lean upon Him, trust in Him, and He will sustain thee in the humbling path of self-denial and lowly-mindedness. I do not mean a voluntary humility; but that humility which is induced by a watchful, well-timed obe-

dience to the secret manifestations of the divine will. This will humble the creature; but, blessed be his name, it leads into, and preserves in, a capacity to receive the further and further manifestations of his Will, of his Truth, of his Light, of his love, even as He knows we can bear it, and as, in his wisdom, He sees meet to unfold them to us. But, oh! the great loss which is sustained, I believe, through the want of following on to know Him, in the only way in which we can attain to the knowledge of Him, the way of Faith; which word implies not only belief in, but reliance and dependence upon Him. And though this may sometimes be found a tribulated path, I believe it is the path to the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom of peace and joy: begun and revealed in degree, I believe, to the redeemed mind even in this life, and consummated in that which is to come.

When I consider where thou art placed, the large meeting thou belongest to;—how desirable it appears to me, that thou shouldst make an early and a full surrender. Keep in the quiet: keep in sweet innocence. Let peace be the primary object; and then other things rightly permitted and dispensed, will be enjoyed with humility and thankfulness.

What would sincere dedication and submission in a few individuals, do in your large meet-

ing. How would example strengthen and encourage others to come forward, who are halting between two opinions; and whilst they hesitate, weakness besets, and probably increases: whereas, if faithfulness were yielded to the manifestations of Truth in the mind, how would the divine arm support and sustain; how would strength be afforded to walk steadily forward, perhaps with feeble and diffident, but with safe and peaceful steps. Oh! the exceeding preciousness of early dedication, of early submitting the creaturely will to the discoveries of duty. Inasmuch as the Almighty is the fountain of happiness, the more we look to Him for direction and safe guidance, the more likely we are to arrive at this fountain; and, I believe, in condescending loving-kindness, He is dealing with those who early make Him their choice. I believe He gives them to experience his fatherly care over them; and every now and then gives them some proof that it is well for them that they have trusted in Him.

I do not wish to enlarge; but I want to encourage thee to be of those who sit alone, and keep silence; bearing the yoke, that precious yoke, which, through divine goodness, keeps down in us those dispositions and propensities, which, if not kept under, will retard or prevent the growth of the plant of renown, in that dig-

nity and stature which it otherwise would attain, and which should outgrow and overgrow every thing else in us.

—— I was not sure whether the cause [of religion] might not, in some degree, suffer from my remarks respecting the intimations of Truth to the mind about outward concerns. Perhaps an apprehension of the right thing suffering by our friend's over-rating some of his impressions, at the same time that he is managing so poorly, might drive me too far in expression on the opposite side. Exceedingly precious, when vouchsafed, do I esteem the guidance of a gracious Providence respecting outward things. But I think I have noticed that some of those whom I have loved, esteemed, and honoured, have been very cautious of speaking of this favour, as it respected themselves; probably considering it as something that is better known and felt, than talked about; and scarcely enough given them as their own, to be made so free with:—being, in order to keep the creature humble, low, fearful, dependent, and in self-abasement, so gently and faintly, though intelligibly marked and defined to themselves, as may serve to preserve them walking by faith, and not by strong sight. Should a suitable opportunity occur, perhaps thou wilt mention a

few words expressive of my sense of the matter. I should not like to hurt the cause, nor wound our friend's mind to his disadvantage. I trust I may thankfully say, that I am a humble believer in the condescension, goodness, and mercy of our heavenly Father to his dependent children, both respecting their outward and inward condition and circumstances.

— I wish both you and we may be favoured, at seasons, with the renewings of best ability to desire for all the youth, most particularly the objects of our care, that the divine fear may be richly placed in their hearts, as the most effectual way and means for them to inherit every blessing consistent with the Heavenly Father's will for them to enjoy; and as the blessed preservation from the many evils which abound in the world, and which court their affection.

CHAP. VII.

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS, WRITTEN FROM
1820 TO 1823.

1820.—3 *mo.* 9. It is not pleasant to me, that thy kind and acceptable letter of last month should have remained so long unacknowledged. I believe it can be attributed to no cause more justly, than to the poverty of my own mind; though I am aware that the expression of this is not likely to make thee rich. However, it behoves us to endure with patience our allotment, and the various changes which are permitted; and happy is it, if our poverty be not the consequence of our own indolence, inattention, or disobedience. My own health is very favourably continued; but I very often remember the flight of time, and that many, very many sands have escaped from the glass. This is a chequered and very uncertain scene: how happy for those, who under all, and through all, are permitted often to cast anchor; and feelingly to acknowledge, that the Lord is good, worthy

to be waited for, served, honoured, and obeyed, under all circumstances, and in all conditions.

1821.—12 *mo.* 15. Oh! the importance, as I view the subject, of Friends keeping in the unity, out of disputations, in the self-denial, (which includes a willingness to suffer,) in the littleness and abasement, rather than that any of Truth's testimonies should fall to the ground.

I think I never saw the necessity and value of Friends in this nation being a compact undivided body, more than now; that its conduct may speak, not a confused, but intelligible and inviting language to those who are seeking rest for the sole of their feet.

I consider it may have been a great favour to our Society to have been disqualified, as the criminal law stands, from serving on juries; as well as, I think it is, from accepting places of profit under government, in the present mixed state of things. And I suppose we neither of us apprehend that Friends, as a religious body, are less in danger from the spirit of the world and its friendship, than they were a century ago.

1822.—7 mo. 3*. Though much attended with mental poverty, I seem not easy to omit saluting you with a few lines expressive of endeared affection, and of a hope, that amidst the various ways in which the cause of Truth may, under the divine blessing, be acceptably promoted, that in which you are now engaged may be one. And under present feeling, I seem as if I might say, it matters little whether the flock visited be smaller or greater, or whether what we have to communicate be little or much, if the great and gracious Shepherd condescend to own the engagement with the animating influence of his love.

“A little with the blessing is a deal:

Witness the widow's oil, the widow's meal.”

I think I can say, my heart dearly salutes you, and craves your preservation in the meekness, innocence, and simplicity of the Gospel. I, if capable of seeing any thing, think there is great beauty and precious safety, in those who come in amongst us, keeping enough to the measure of their own gift and experience; endeavouring daily, as it may consist with the

* This Lettes was written to some of his friends, when on a visit, by appointment of the Meeting for Sufferings, to the Friends of Pyrmont and Minden.

divine will, to know an increase therein, but not outstepping their guide. Oh! what sympathy is called for, on behalf of sincere and tender minds, circumstanced as this little flock is, in such a country. May your visit tend to strengthen in a lowly, humble, quiet, inward dependence on the increase of the gift, individually received, as the likely way for them to be a strength to one another.

James Parnel says to Stephen Crisp, "Be not hasty to know any thing beyond thy measure;" and really there does seem something very precious in this, provided the measure be fully kept up to; and we are preserved out of all supineness, lethargy, and inattention. Do remember me, as a poor brother, that wishes to make some humble advancement in solid experience of that good, which in a day of trial will be more to us than all the world. However appearances may be against it, I have been in so poor a spot myself, as to seem almost unfit to meddle with sacred things, beyond my own breast; yet you see I venture—I hope I humbly venture."

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1822.—7 mo. 3. What a scale of usefulness do — and — move on, compared with some of us; but then I remember, that no one in

sincerity of love and attachment to the cause, shall even shut a door in the house for nought. And there is great sweetness, I believe, often experienced in the humbler and more retired walks in the Master's vineyard ; so that all depends, may we not say, on endeavouring to be just what we should be, whether it be foot or hand, or only as a finger on the hand.

1822,—10 mo. 22. What a beautiful society, I believe the Society of Friends would be, if all were diligent to improve the talents bestowed upon them ; pressing daily towards the mark of our calling ; not resting contented in any state, known and felt to be imperfect ; and thereby encouraging others to be easy and satisfied in a state of imperfection. I have of late thought, that however assailed with weakness and trial, it will not do to rest herein ; but using the strength afforded, be it little or much, wage war with every thing which we feel impeding our journey to a state of acceptance, wherein there is no condemnation.

1822.—10 mo. 25. I know, dear friend, that human nature is liable to be much tossed, and tried, and perplexed, sometimes with looking back, and sometimes with looking forward ; but our safety, I think, very much lies in seeking

after quietness and resignation, faithfully and in simplicity endeavouring, in our outward employments, to discharge the duty of one day at a time, without being over anxious ; but quietly trusting in the Lord for ability to get through the duty of one day after another, as they come in succession ; because He knows exactly our situation and circumstances ; and how availingly to pity us and to care for us in all our temptations and besetments, so that there is great advantage indeed in quietly looking to Him for succour. Be sure, do not look for or desire great things, either inwardly or outwardly ; but desire, above all things, to be kept in humility and fear, that so thy steppings may be safe and sure : in them is sweet preservation. I believe this is the state in which we are at times favoured to see a little light upon our path ; and I desire thee to be thankful for every degree of true light, be it ever so small ; for we have nothing truly good at our own command.

1822.—12 mo. 14. It has often occurred to my mind, that events of this interesting nature [the loss of our near and tender connexions] frequently furnish fresh occasion, calmly and deeply to ponder what are the next steps for the nearly-connected survivors to take ; a little light upon the path of the bereaved, at such

seasons, is exceedingly to be prized, and if duly appreciated, is, I believe likely, under a sense of loss and stripping, to increase our dependence on the guidance, protection, and sustaining arm of heavenly Goodness.

1822.—12 *mo.* 21. The removal of our venerable elder, William Tuke, will, I think, be felt interesting to many; as of a standard-bearer in our camp. I feel desirous that his decease may have a tendency to quicken and animate many, to stand nobly for the cause he was concerned to advocate; not for the establishing of their own views, but the advancement of true piety, holiness, and humility, and thereby the glory of our heavenly Father. I believe it would be acceptable to Him, that as one faithful soldier is removed, others should the more nearly and diligently unite, that there be no breach in our ranks; but that we might, notwithstanding, press forward and advance, as a well-ordered army, under the invincible captain. It feels, as I write, precious to me to believe, that what we sometimes donominate "the cause" is unchangeably good, and worthy to be espoused, being the promotion of the glory of God, in the happiness and salvation of man. And I am a little cheered in the hope, although many, and some very pleasant persons, are too much at ease,

much short of a state of dedication and resignation, and of perfect obedience, yet that the call will continue so availingly to go forth, that many will be aroused, and induced to come forward with increased zeal and fervency of spirit, clothed with humility as a garment; and that our society will yet be beautiful and lovely, an ornament and a praise.

1822.—12 mo. 29. May we be preserved so humble, so lowly, so in the spirit of gospel self-denial, as becomes the devoted followers of Christ; and as would enable beholders to discover in us the genuine features of his flock. I hope I hate formality for formality's sake; but when Friends have had the privilege of being trained and accustomed to a plain, exemplary dress, I am concerned that those I love may use great caution, ere they depart from it.

My apprehension is, that the present time is a dangerous one to Friends. They are courted and smiled upon by the world; and, without very great caution, we are liable, in our civil and religious intercourse with them, to be drawn away from that weightiness of spirit, wherein true religious advancement, I believe, is known. The true, real, and genuine ground, upon which Friends have been mercifully brought, I believe to be exceedingly precious; and our safety and

usefulness to others much depend on our keeping upon it, that we may be strengthened availing by our example to invite others on to it, instead of quitting it to go on to theirs.

It becomes truly religious characters not to run with the changeable spirit of the times. We may maintain a care respecting this, and yet have humble views of ourselves, not thinking ourselves better than others, nor piquing ourselves on any peculiarity; but in watchfulness and fear, endeavouring not to quit our ranks, or give occasion by our example to any fellow-soldier to desert his.

1823.—4 *mo.* In all the circumstances and changes which we have to experience, what a favour it seems to be, to be strengthened to stay our minds upon the Lord, and to feel at times a sensible, refreshing calm, in which we can rejoice with thankfulness, though with fear, knowing how little it is in our power to command or preserve, or retain this feeling; but yet it is very sweet now and then to get a little portion of it. It is something to recur to, and is indeed as a brook by the way, enabling to hold up the head; and thus, in low, succeeding seasons, how encouraging it is to remember that there is this precious state to be at times known. How does it furnish occasion still to trust on, and not cast

away our confidence ; but to believe that although our lot may be in poverty of spirit, yet that the gracious Shepherd, whose goodness and mercy are unbounded, will never leave nor forsake us, as we endeavour to trust in Him. So that however tossed, or however beset with trying things, let us often, very often, center down in humble quietness, and calm dependence on the Lord ; and then, I believe, he will sustain and preserve us.

1823.—10 mo. 18. It has been a subject of very considerable anxiety, that we might be comfortably supplied with a companion gifted with the requisites to contribute to soothe and solace our declining days, which I consider of very great consequence ; that the mind may be sweetly at liberty to husband and improve the supplies of good mercifully vouchsafed day after day, so that there may be a little verdure, even in advanced age. In adverting to the changes we have experienced within the last year or two, how apt is the mind to dwell on the privations, when we might more profitably be clothed with gratitude and humility, in a sense of the many privileges vouchsafed, and continued, and renewed.

May Friends of every class be encouraged to

come up to the mark assigned them, in firmness and humility, two very requisite companions to each other in the Christian character; I might have added, and wisdom. I do believe that the want of these, and of more quietness and inward attention, has tended to lay waste the minds of very many in our favoured society; intended, in divine wisdom and mercy, as I sometimes think, to have been a compact, separated body, endowed with very precious gifts and favours. If there is too little of a capacity for inviting others, to be seen in many places, there are many amongst us who desire the prosperity of Truth. And oh! that none of us may shrink from baptism: for may this not be called the only way for truly dignified and useful members to be produced in the church?

CHAP. VIII.

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS, WRITTEN IN THE YEARS 1824 AND 1825.

1824.—1 *mo.* 1. Thy allusion to the experience of a winter season, might meet a similar statement from us, and I doubt not, from many more; and seeing this feeling and allotment are in the permission of a wisdom which cannot err, I desire we may accept them with thankfulness, and be enabled wisely to improve from them, quickening our diligence in the great and highly important engagement of watchfulness, and deep inward retirement of mind, before Him who knows exactly all our wants, and how and when to relieve them to our lasting advantage. Under a feeling of inward poverty and want, of late known and felt, I have thought it exceedingly desirable to labour after inward quiet and attention, that the strength may be rightly felt to be renewed, and our religious experience, in the goodness and mercy of

Israel's Shepherd, to be enlarged. Hereby the ground-work of true patience would be laid, and the way prepared for that which is so much wanted among us; namely, for our becoming more a weighty, humble, watchful, self-denying people, spiritually intelligent, and diligent in submitting to divine requirings, advancing from step to step on the ladder which reaches from earth to heaven. May greenness adorn our evening, and divine love and mercy be our eternal crown of rejoicing.

1824.—3 mo. 15. Oh the simplicity that I think there is in the Truth! Oh the simplicity of the Gospel, and of an inward, attentive, lowly waiting, for the renewed revelations of it! How can this departure from it [in America] have been occasioned? What a favour, if those who have been in any degree jostled off the foundation, may be in mercy brought back, and have to declare to others, that, in a cloudy time, they had missed their way, but are now, in humility and meekness, brought back to the quiet habitation, the place of rest and safety, where I believe the filial fear thou mentionest, is happily known and lived in. I hope our dear friends now among them will be graciously protected; furnished with the needful supply of wisdom and strength, and often have to lie down

sweetly beside the still waters. Oh! what a favour we can conceive this to be, to the poor, exercised, and oft tribulated servants. Recurring again to the occasions of sorrow, I seem to want to add, how strange it is that any who love the Truth in sincerity, should not dread the baneful consequences of breaking the unity—the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.

If I have any good desires, I think one of them is, that the ministry may be increasingly weighty among us. Our dear friends in that station, are much to be felt for, and I wish that we may be favoured with increased qualification to contribute to their help and comfort. How does the desire arise, that there may be quite as much in weight as measure. It is a very interesting time we live in; and I think we are a singularly-appointed people. How desirable is it, that we may know our place and keep it—a waiting, solid, self-denying people. Greatly favoured we have been; and we have reason to believe shall be, if we keep to our principles—I might say, to our principle; the divine light, life, and power revealed in the soul. Believing in this with steadfastness, I believe we should often have to be very poor, and sit very low. But I fear to say much on this im-

portant and weighty subject. Before I quite quit it, perhaps I may as well say, that I have (of late particularly) thought on the benefit and excellence of quietness and retiredness of mind; and the want of it in our religious and favoured Society, as well as in the world at large. If it were possible to make Friends sufficiently in love with it, what blessed effects might be hoped for from it.

1824.—4 mo. 13. I am a believer in that representation of George Dillwyn's, respecting important deliberations and discussions in meetings for discipline, somewhat on this wise: that, when Friends are honestly, sincerely, and piously, engaged in delivering their respective views, with becoming condescension and feeling for each other, and the subject is drawing to a point, there is sometimes known a seal on the top of it, which bespeaks the conclusion to be owned. What a favour and encouragement is it, when Friends can perceive this!

1824.—7 mo. 30. I notice thy information respecting our dear friend's improvement in her health. It is indeed a favour, when humility clothes the poor instruments, as a garment from head to foot: indeed, what virtue is like it for value? It becomes the man with one

talent, and it is quite as needful for him that has the two or the five. What are the most gifted, without it, but poor, mistaken creatures, forgetful that in a moment all qualification for profit or service may be withheld and suspended, if not entirely withdrawn?

1824.—11 *mo.* 12. It is not likely that the expression of my poverty should make thee rich. I would rather endeavour to profit by every dispensation, that I may be favoured to know my attention quickened, and my feet more and more established in the faith, and hope, and patience of the Lord's children.

I am obliged for the various items of interesting intelligence contained in thy letter. May we who move in comparatively narrow spheres, be enabled to pray for the preservation and protection of the sincere and upright-hearted, under every allotment, and among all the vicissitudes permitted to occur. How do I desire that the sincere-hearted in America may be kept in the patient, steady pursuit of purity and holiness, and know from season to season the discovery of the brook by the way, enabling to hold up the head, and to trust on.

What a people should we be, if we all moved on, in the condescendingly appointed order, desiring to be neither greater nor less, than

divine wisdom intendeth us to be. Then surely would peace be our portion, and the glory be ascribed to the blessed and holy Head; and we be living as dear children of the same heavenly-minded family, abounding, according to the divine will, in the fruits of the Spirit.

1824.—12 *mo.* 8. Within a very short space indeed, I have attended to the silent grave the remains of two old acquaintances, respecting whom it may now be said, as by and by of us, the place that has known them, will know them no more. Not that I think it desirable that the dropping off of those with whom we have been used to converse, should be allowed unprofitably to depress, but to quicken our attention to the solemn subject of the uncertainty of time, and of all temporal things: it is indeed an awfully serious subject, and worthy of our daily and hourly meditation. Our Quarterly Meeting is again approaching: may it be a time of obtaining a little increase of strength, and of encouragement to walk in the path of faith, and humble confidence in the divine arm of Power.

1825.—4 *mo.* 8. My mind, one day this week, was, I think I may say, sweetly comforted

in the contemplation of the blessedness of that state, which is preserved so low, so little, and humble, and feelingly dependent, as to be thankful for even a morsel of heavenly bread, and even a small portion of that living water which sustains the traveller in the path of faith; and this was accompanied with gladness, that, from the morning of our day as a religious society, it was given forth as the sense of Friends, respecting the Scriptures, that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false! It is very pleasant to me, that there is extant part of a letter from William Savery, of America, written at the time of the trouble occasioned by H. B.'s dissent from Friends, to a friend in London; a few lines of which I incline to transcribe, though I should not suppose they are new to thee: viz. "The longer I live, the more unshaken confidence I think I obtain, that the doctrines laid down by Robert Barclay, and our first Friends, founded upon the New Testament, and still maintained by the body of Society at large, are invulnerable to the efforts of vain philosophy, sophistry, and curious speculation, so long as we retain our belief in that most excellent of all books; and I am of the mind, that all such as depart from that foundation, will wither and be confounded."

1825.—4 *mo.* 23. Since our last friendly conversation, I have felt much interested in the comfort of thy declining years. Thou hast often mentioned to me thy uncomfortable feelings and prospects, respecting thyself and human nature. I believe, much of them is occasioned by thy not endeavouring to lay hold of the mercy of God, offered to his creature man, through the Spirit of Christ in the soul; because I think, and heartily believe, that by resorting to that, we are often permitted to feel our minds, through its blessed influence, brought into a state of resignation to the dispensations of Providence, and into a belief that all He does, however inscrutable to our limited and finite comprehension, is in perfect wisdom; and that his power is sufficient to turn every thing that He suffers to befall us, to a good account in the end, agreeably to the apostle's testimony, "that all things work together for good, to them that love and fear God."

As we reverently believe that the Almighty is a being of infinite and adorable perfection in all his attributes, He stands in no need of any thing from us; but we stand in need of every thing from Him. And we cannot rationally suppose any motive in Him by the creation of man, but the communication of

happiness to his creature. And it is good to entertain the belief, that this divine goodwill, and gracious design to communicate happiness, is not of a transient nature, but constant and perpetual, in Him in whom it is said, "there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." And I cannot for a moment entertain the idea that this Divine and Almighty Being, who created man, for happiness and immortality, is so little mindful of him, as when he is come into the world, to leave him to shift for himself; a creature, who, He well knows, has daily and hourly occasion for his providential care and fatherly protection. Remember that interesting saying of our blessed Saviour, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered," as emphatically descriptive of the tender notice and regard of the Most High towards his rational and immortal creatures.

I am sincerely interested in thy comfort; and I desire that the evening of thy days may be cheered by the enlivening persuasion, that thou canst not be from under the notice of Him, who is an omnipresent Spirit, and who is not only a God afar off, but also a God nigh at hand; about our bed, and about our path, and who spieth out all our ways;

and, as David beautifully declares, "whose tender mercies are over all his works;" and that thus believing, thy sun may go down in brightness, and thy latter end be crowned with peace, the blessed presage of everlasting happiness.

THE END.



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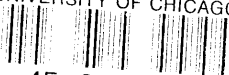


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